DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 638 UD 022 787

TITLE A Management Study of Personnel Policies and the Department of Personnel Services.
INSTITUTION Cresap, McCormick, and Paget, Inc., Chicago, Ill.
SPONS AGENCY Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Md. Dept. of Educational Accountability.
PUB DATE Mar 83
NOTE 172p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Board of Education Policy; Compensation (Remuneration); *Cost Effectiveness; Elementary Secondary Education; *Personnel Evaluation; Personnel Management; *Personnel Policy; Public Schools; *Recruitment; School Districts; Staff Utilization; *Task Analysis
IDENTIFIERS *Montgomery County Public Schools MD

ABSTRACT

The report presents the findings of a management study conducted to review personnel policies and practices in the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public School system. The study, part of a multiyear evaluation of the entire school system's management operation, examines personnel policies, procedures, and operations in the areas of recruitment, application processing, equal employment opportunity, employee classification and placement, performance evaluations, promotions, personnel testing, preemployment physical examinations, voluntary and involuntary transfers, administration of substitute programs, personnel records maintenance, administration of workers' compensation and leave programs, and work scheduling. Based on the analyses, it was recommended that: (1) the Department of Personnel Services should strengthen its leadership role; (2) there is a need for further improvement in Personnel Services' functions, structure, staffing, and management; (3) accessibility to policies and procedures should be improved; (4) the use of part time positions should be instituted where possible to reduce cost; (5) leave policies should be reevaluated to reduce sick leave abuses; and (6) costs and benefits of work performance samples should be reassessed for cost effectiveness. Appended to the study is a summary of a national survey of personnel departments. (AOS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED230639

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A MANAGEMENT STUDY OF PERSONNEL POLICIES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

March 1983

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
MCPS
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A MANAGEMENT STUDY OF PERSONNEL POLICIES
AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	INTRODUCTION	
	Objectives And Scope	1
	Study Methodology	3
	Arrangement Of This Report	4
II	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
	Mission And Role	1
	Organization And Staffing	2
	Management And Administration	4
	Policies And Procedures	5
III	DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION	
	A - Background	1
	Department Of Personnel Services	1
	Other MCPS Personnel-Related Units	2
	Office Of The Director - Personnel	4
	MCPS Personnel Policies And Procedures	5
	A&S Selection Process	10
	Automated Support	12
	B - Observations	15
	Mission And Role	15
	Organization And Staffing	17
	Management And Administration	23
	MCPS Personnel Policies And Procedures	28
	C - Recommendations	34
	Mission And Role	34
	Organization And Staffing	36
	Management And Administration	39
	MCPS Personnel Policies And Procedures	45

Chapter		Page
IV	DIVISION OF STAFFING	
	A - Background	1
	Organization, Staffing, And Budget	1
	Recruitment	4
	Processing Of Applications	5
	Screening, Interviewing, And Selection	6
	Processing Of New Hires	9
	School Employee Placement Procedures	10
	Substitutes	12
	B - Observations	14
	Organization And Staffing	14
	Management And Administration	16
	Management Processes	18
	C - Recommendations	31
	Organization And Staffing	31
	Management And Administration	33
	Management Processes	35
V	DIVISION OF SALARY ADMINISTRATION, CERTIFICATION, AND RECORDS	
	A - Background	1
	Organization And Budget	1
	Classification And Compensation	2
	Records Maintenance	6
	Testing	9
	Certification Process	11
	Performance Evaluations	12
	B - Observations	13
	Organization And Staffing	13
	Management And Administration	14
	C - Recommendations	24
	Organization And Staffing	24
	Management And Administration	25

Chapter		Page
VI	COST IMPACT AND NEXT STEPS	
	Cost Impact	1
	Next Steps	3
	APPENDIX	

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit		Following Page
III-1	Current Plan Of Organization	III-2
III-2	Level Of Personnel Staffing	III-2
III-3	Personnel Budget	III-2
III-4	Proposed Plan Of Organization	III-36
IV-1	Number Of Persons Hired For Permanent Positions	IV-6
IV-2	School Employee Placement Procedures	IV-10
V-1	Current Plan Of Organization - Division Of Salary Administration, Certification, And Records	V-1
V-2	Number Of Monthly CRT PMF Transactions	V-14
VI-1	Responsibilities And Schedules For Implementing Study Recommendations	VI-4

I - INTRODUCTION

I - INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a management study of the Department of Personnel Services in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The study was part of the multiyear, 21-study Management Operations Review and Evaluation (MORE) of the entire school system, mandated by the Board of Education and coordinated by the Department of Educational Accountability under the direction of the Superintendent. This introductory chapter states the objectives and scope of the study, explains the study methodology, and outlines the arrangement of the report.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The purpose of this study was to conduct a thorough review of the personnel policies and practices of MCPS and of the mission, organization, staffing, management, and operations of the Department of Personnel Services. In pursuit of this goal, the specific objectives were to:

- Examine MCPS's current personnel policies, procedures, and operations
- Determine the extent to which current personnel services meet MCPS's needs
- Assess the need and potential for eliminating, reducing, or consolidating existing personnel services
- Evaluate the adequacy of MCPS's personnel policies and procedures and compare those policies and procedures with practices in comparable school systems
- Identify additional policies, services, and procedures needed to strengthen achievement of MCPS's mission or the efficiency and effectivness of MCPS's management
- Evaluate the management, organization, and operations of the Department of Personnel Services
- Assess the adequacy of automated support for the Department's operations
- Identify opportunities for improvement and cost savings in personnel services

- Develop specific and implementable recommendations to enable MCPS to capitalize on current strengths and to take advantage of opportunities for improvement and cost reductions as quickly as possible

- Document and present all study findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The study encompassed all MCPS personnel policies and services, all units within the Department of Personnel Services, and all other school system organizational units having personnel-related responsibilities.

Policies, procedures, and practices were examined in the areas of:

- Recruitment, application processing, personnel testing, preemployment physical examinations, applicant interviewing and selection, and equal employment opportunity

- Classification and compensation, certification, employee placement (including initial assignments, voluntary and involuntary transfers, and returns from leave), performance evaluations, promotions, and employee discipline

- Administration of substitute programs

- Maintenance of personnel records

- Administration of workers' compensation, disability leave, and other leave programs

- Alternative work schedules, including flex time and the four-day week.

Examination of the Department of Personnel Services focused on:

- Working relationships with other organizational units and users' perceptions of the Department's services and performance

- The suitability and effectiveness of current staffing and organizational arrangements, management, and administration

- The necessity of all tasks currently performed and the efficiency and effectiveness of procedures used in carrying out assigned functions

- The accuracy and security of records and files and the use of office automation and data processing

- The adequacy and suitability of staff skills and training

- Cost trends.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study methodology consisted of four interrelated steps: planning and orientation, initial fact-finding, identification of strengths and opportunities for improvement, and development of recommendations and preparation of the final report.

Initially, representatives of the consulting team met with the Director - Administrative Analysis and Audits (the official in the Department of Educational Accountability with lead responsibility for the MORE studies) to discuss refinements in the plan presented in Cresap, McCormick and Paget's (CMP's) proposal, the timing of study activities, documents to be reviewed, and persons to be interviewed. On the basis of these discussions, CMP prepared a detailed work plan to guide each activity in accomplishing the school system's objectives for the study.

Fact-finding consisted of a review of documents, including personnel policies and procedures, budgets, organization charts, staffing lists, plans, reports, forms, position descriptions, and position questionnaires completed by employees prior to this study. Approximately 80 persons were interviewed, including:

- The Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent, and the Superintendent's Executive Assistant

- Forty persons, including managers and staff, in the Department of Personnel Services

- The three Associate Superintendents, two Area Associate Superintendents, and six principals

- Eleven Directors and other staff members in departments with personnel-related responsibilities

- Ten Directors and other staff members in a sample of user departments

- The presidents of the three employee organizations.

Many of these persons were interviewed on more than one occasion. Reviews of written statements of policies and procedures were supplemented with observations of operations and files in the Department. In addition, a detailed phone survey was conducted of a national sample of 13 comparable school systems, including 4 school systems in the Washington, D.C., area.

Upon completion of fact-finding, the study team conducted a preliminary analysis of the strengths and opportunities for improvement in each area of policy, service, and operation encompassed by the study. Initial findings were tested and substantiated through discussions with additional officials, follow-up discussions with persons interviewed earlier, and the collection and analysis of additional data.

On the basis of these analyses, specific recommendations were developed to capitalize on the substantial opportunities for improvement, and a plan of action was prepared to guide implementation of the recommendations. All findings and recommendations were then documented in a draft of this final report. The draft report was submitted to the Director - Administrative Analysis and Audits for review by selected school system officials. After discussing these reviews, the consulting team made necessary modifications and prepared the final version of the report.

ARRANGEMENT OF THIS REPORT

This report is arranged in six chapters, as follows:

I - Introduction - (this chapter)

II - Executive Summary - summarizes the study's major findings and recommendations

III - Departmental Organization - presents background information, observations, and recommendations pertaining to the organization of MCPS's personnel functions; the organization, staffing, and responsibilities of the Office of the Director in the Department of Personnel Services; and selected policies and procedures

IV - Division Of Staffing - presents background information on the Division of Staffing's responsibilities, organization and staffing, management and administration, and management processes; identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement in each of these areas; and recommends ways of effecting the needed improvements

V - Division Of Salary Administration, Certification, And Records - presents background information, study observations, and recommendations pertaining to this Division's responsibilities, organization and staffing, management and administration, and management processes

VI - Cost Impact And Next Steps - summarizes the cost impact of all study recommendations and suggests an action plan and assignments of responsibility for implementing the recommendations.

II - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

II - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary highlights the major findings and recommendations of the Management Operations Review and Evaluation (MORE) study of the Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) Department of Personnel Services, conducted by Cresap, McCormick and Paget (CMP) in the seven-month period ending January 1983.

The primary purpose of this study was to identify needed improvements in MCPS's personnel policies and practices through a comprehensive management review. Particular emphasis was placed on needed improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of personnel operations and on the identification of opportunities for reducing costs without diminishing the quality of services. The study's scope was comprehensive, covering all personnel policies and procedures, all MCPS units having personnel-related responsibilities, and all relevant aspects of the Department of Personnel Services, including mission, organization, staffing, management, and operations. Study activities included reviews of relevant documents, interviews with more than 80 persons, a national survey of 13 comparable school systems, analysis of strengths and opportunities for improvement, formulation of recommendations to capitalize on significant opportunities for improvement, preparation of a plan of action to guide implementation of the recommendations, and preparation and presentation of the final report.

MISSION AND ROLE

The primary recommendation of this report is that the Department of Personnel Services should assume a stronger leadership role. The Superintendent and other top staff should be assertive in ensuring that line managers fulfill their roles as personnel officers and in using the Department of Personnel Services to assist in upgrading and monitoring personnel practices in schools and other administrative units.

The study findings reaffirm the importance of a supporting mission for the Department of Personnel Services, with line managers serving in a decision-making capacity. In a school system such as MCPS, which strongly values both decentralization of authority to the area offices and schools and consistently high-quality performance, the proper role of the Department of Personnel Services is to provide the best possible assistance to school system managers and employees in the conduct of personnel activities in accordance with agreed-upon policies and procedures.

The Superintendent should strengthen the Department's leadership role, however, in determining personnel needs and in updating and communicating personnel policies and procedures to meet the system's changing needs. School system managers should continue to play key roles in such important personnel functions as selecting and evaluating employees, but the Department should be more assertive in monitoring compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and procedures to ensure effective management, consistency of treatment, and progress toward such critical goals as equal employment opportunity.

The Department should be assigned responsibility for comprehensive manpower planning for the school system. Such planning would provide the basis for anticipating needs for new or modified personnel resources, policies, or procedures and for preparing more accurate projections of staffing requirements.

The Department also should be assigned a stronger role in monitoring the implementation of personnel practices, including performance evaluations, by line managers. Inconsistencies in following policies and procedures among schools and other administrative units create serious management and equity problems. Responsibility for correcting such problems rests with the Superintendent and his line managers, but the Superintendent should charge the Department of Personnel Services with responsibility for monitoring policy implementation and for providing information to be used by the Superintendent in enforcing consistent practices.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Department of Personnel Services' current organizational structure is appropriate, but improvements in the Department's capacity are possible through changes in the scope of its functions, its supervisory structure, and the level of its staffing.

Under the current MCPS organization, the Department of Personnel Services should continue to report to the Superintendent through the Executive Assistant. This arrangement gives the Director - Personnel Services the direct access that he needs to the Superintendent for critical personnel decisions; it also provides the Director - Personnel Services with access to the Deputy Superintendent for operational issues. Because the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Executive Assistant work closely on overall direction of MCPS, including many personnel issues, the Superintendent can provide personal attention to those personnel issues he considers of particular importance while delegating responsibility for routine personnel matters to the Executive Assistant.

Under MCPS's current organizational structure, several units with personnel-related responsibilities are appropriately separate from the Department of Personnel Services, but the separation of units with various employee training and counseling functions is inefficient. The Department of Staff Development, the Special and Alternative Education In-Service Training Unit, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and the retirement counseling section of the Division of Insurance and Retirement should be placed in the Department of Personnel Services.

The transfer of the staff development function to personnel will bring in close organizational proximity positions with responsibility for closely related activities and will enable the Department of Personnel Services to accomplish more effectively its primary objective now and in the future. The increased emphasis on manpower planning and on transfers of personnel has a training and counseling component; the need for strong personnel management at the school and administrative unit level requires coordination with the design of A&S training programs.

The transfer of EAP and retirement counseling functions should support the growing need for counseling and retraining of employees who are facing fewer opportunities for advancement, staying in the school system (and often in the same positions) longer, encountering unfamiliar and sometimes demoralizing new experiences such as school closings and involuntary transfers, and sometimes considering retirement as a solution to persistent problems.

While staffing in the Department of Personnel Services has been reduced approximately 15 per cent over the past five years (from 66 to 56 employees), the level of services provided has generally been maintained through improvements in procedures and efficiency and through decreases in the Department's workload as a result of declining enrollments and consequent reductions in the number of new hires. Additional staffing reductions are possible through consolidation of responsibility, further streamlining of procedures in several areas, consolidation of counseling and training staffs, and improvements in automated support.

Reassignments of responsibility would allow the elimination of two positions (the Assistant Director - Personnel Services and the Personnel Specialist who oversees Records Maintenance) in the near future. Placement of EAP in the Department of Personnel Services would eliminate the need for the EAP's secretarial position. Installation of improved, interactive data processing systems will enable the phasing out of four positions, including a Personnel Assistant in the Division of Staffing and three clerks in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. Finally, increased use of word processing will allow the elimination of one secretarial position in the Division of Staffing. The elimination of these eight positions should result in an annual reduction in operating costs of approximately $226,200, including salaries and benefits.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Department of Personnel Services is basically a competent, well-run unit which provides satisfactory services and which has effected some significant improvements in personnel services and procedures.

The Department does face a difficult task in providing satisfactory service to a broad range of school and administrative unit heads. Assessments of the quality of service provided by the Department vary. Despite a generally positive assessment, some users see a strong need for improvement in the responsiveness of the Department, its coordination and communication of information, and the quality of the advice it gives.

Several additional opportunities for improvement exist in the Department's management. The Department currently lacks written, measurable performance objectives; moreover, the informal, unwritten objectives that do exist tend not to be used effectively to manage the Department's work. This impedes the clarity of expectations and the monitoring of work progress. The Department's managers should establish long-term and annual objectives and corresponding measurable indexes of performance to be used in setting direction and in structuring periodic performance reports. Such objectives would provide Department staff with clear indications of responsibilities and priorities among responsibilities, performance standards (for example, time limits and required quality and thoroughness in completing such tasks as screening applicants, providing information on appropriate candidates to principals and supervisors, and responding to requests for reclassification), and specific indexes to be used in evaluating performance (such as time required to complete specific, recurring tasks and the number of tasks completed within a given period of time).

The Department's efficiency is also hampered by deficiencies in the automated support currently available to it. Development and installation of an improved human resources system, which is proceeding at a slow pace, should be expedited. Priority should be placed on needed improvements in the Personnel Master File (PMF) and position control components. Consideration should be given to developing a simple automated system for providing basic information on applicants, perhaps on the word processing system. The installation of additional word processing equipment also should be accelerated, and the use of word processors should be expanded to more of the Department's activities.

Unification of personnel responsibilities in the 1978 reorganization reduced some of the discrepancies in the treatment of professional and supporting services employees and heightened

sensitivity to such differences, but there are still some discrepancies in attitudes and responsiveness to problems. The Department should continue to strive for equalization of treatment to the extent possible.

Improvements in the management and administration of the Department's two divisions also are possible. Assignments of work to divisions, to subunits, and to individual employees should be allocated on the basis of firmer evidence of task requirements and should be more carefully monitored, with adjustments made based on empirical evidence in order to provide a quantitative basis for ensuring equity in workload. All managers should be given training in such areas as planning, supervision, delegation of responsiblity, and performance evaluation. Intradepartmental communications should be improved through more regular provision of succinct written summaries of important changes in policies and procedures affecting staff members' functions, to supplement existing oral communication. Staffing patterns in both divisions should be modified to reflect seasonal variations in workload, with additional assignments for permanent staff members in the less active winter months and greater reliance on temporary employees and overtime in the busy summer months.

The Division of Staffing should continue to move toward the generalist approach in assisting principals and supervisors with applicant identification and screening in order to enable each principal and supervisor to develop a strong working relationship with a staff member who can assist with all hiring needs in order to enhance the variety and interest of staffing assignments, thereby increasing the possibility of attracting highly qualified persons to these positions. Assignments for screening applications and interviewing candidates should remain specialized, however, enabling individual staff members to develop and apply in-depth knowledge of the requirements of particular types of positions.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MCPS is conscientious about documentation, and its personnel policies and procedures are generally comprehensive, consistent, and clear. Some policies are misunderstood by school system employees, however, partly because they fail to consult the Policies And Procedures Handbook (which is voluminous, perhaps inhibiting frequent usage) and partly because the official handbook has not been updated regularly in the past. Accessibility to and understanding of policies and procedures should be improved through the preparation and periodic updating of a digest of personnel policies by the Department of Personnel Services and through a continuation of the Division of Administrative Analysis and Audits' current efforts to place the Policies And Procedures

Handbook on word processing disks, which should improve the ease of updating. (During the preparation of this report, the Division of Administrative Analysis and Audits completed its work in updating the Handbook, a revised edition of which has been issued.)

Policies and procedures in most areas of personnel practice are generally sound, reflecting broad involvement in their formulation, but specific improvements are needed in several areas. Recruitment procedures and effectiveness should be enhanced through more systematic analyses of the school system's changing staffing needs, the formulation of focused and clearly documented recruiting goals, and more formal and thorough annual analyses of the results of recruitment efforts, based on which adjustments can be made. The procedures that have been developed for the complicated process of placing school-level employees (including involuntary transfers, voluntary transfers, persons returning from leave, and new hires) are sound, but problems result from a failure by top level school system management to observe and enforce deadlines. Deadlines should be strictly enforced to avoid the confusion of last minute placements and the accompanying anxiety experienced by unplaced employees. Further, procedures for allocating new positions and for transferring employees should be modified to assist schools that have demonstrable difficulty in attracting teachers. Improvements in the employee placement process will also require a strengthening of position control, which should be achieved primarily through stricter enforcement of the area administrative offices' responsibilities and the provision of more accurate, accessible, up-to-date information through an interactive automated system.

Part-time positions should be established where appropriate to reduce costs, but care should be taken to maintain the school system's ability to attract high-quality employees and efforts should be made to coordinate part-time positions so that persons wishing to continue working full-time can hold more than one part-time position. With the exception of the summer employment program, the hiring and use of temporary employees are inadequately controlled; steps should be taken to improve selection procedures, record-keeping, and budget controls in this area.

Acceptable factor evaluation systems have been developed for classifying most MCPS positions, with the important exceptions of many maintenance, crafts, transportation, supply, and building services positions. An improved classification system should be developed for such positions to enhance objectivity, equity, and consistency.

Several changes should be considered in the school system's leave policies (when the employee organizations' contracts are next negotiated) and in the Department's leave administration

responsibilities. First, the Department of Personnel Services and the Department of Financial Services should undertake a study of possible sick leave abuses and should assume a more active role in monitoring the use of sick leave. Second, MCPS should study the costs of its generous leave advancement policies (which go beyond state requirements in advancing annual leave as well as sick leave to all employees) and should consider alternative policies which might reduce financial losses resulting when employees use up advanced leave and depart without reimbursing the school system. Third, the Department of Financial Services and the Department of Educational Accountability should conduct a thorough analysis of problems and alternative procedures in the processing of claims for disability leave and workers' compensation, which sometimes place hardships on individuals who must reimburse the school system for disallowed compensation and which sometimes result in financial losses for the system.

Improvements are also possible in several aspects of records maintenance. As the new automated human resources system is developed, the PMF should be improved to eliminate the need for redundant hard-copy cards and to improve the timeliness of information updates. Data collection and entry forms and procedures should be streamlined to eliminate existing duplications of effort. Additional steps should be taken to reduce the number of required manual payroll adjustments to alleviate problems in the Division of Payroll identified in the MORE Report On The Payroll System.

Finally, the costs and benefits of obtaining work performance samples for selected supporting services positions should be assessed. If it is determined that useful information can be obtained in this way without unreasonable investments of time and money in developing and applying valid instruments, efforts should proceed when the Personnel Assessment Specialist has developed the planned aptitude and proficiency tests, which will be important additions to the useful applicant testing program.

III - DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION

This chapter discusses the overall organization of the Montgomery County Public Schools' personnel functions among the Department of Personnel Services and personnel-related units in other school system departments. It also reviews the organization, staffing, and responsibilities of the Office of the Director in the Department of Personnel Services and relevant personnel policies and procedures.

A - BACKGROUND

This section describes the organization, staffing, and responsibilities of personnel functions in MCPS and of the Office of the Director in the Department of Personnel Services.

DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

The Department of Personnel Services is one of four departments reporting to the Superintendent of Schools' Executive Assistant. The Department's mission is to provide a comprehensive personnel program for all MCPS employees, which includes (as of February 1, 1983):

- 527 administrative and supervisory (A&S) employees
- 6,211 teachers
- 5,596 supporting services employees (occupying 4,508.8 full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions)
- 3,132 temporary employees
- 2,066 persons on the approved substitute teacher list
- 225 persons on the clerical substitute list
- 167 persons on the cafeteria worker substitute list
- 376 persons on the bus operator substitute list.

The Department is responsible for planning, coordinating, reviewing, and managing all school system activities pertaining to recruitment, selection, employment, assignment, reductions in

force, suspension, termination, pay plan development and implementation, certification, personnel records maintenance, and leave administration.

The Department currently is staffed by 56 full-time employees, organized into three units: the Office of the Director (7 employees), the Division of Staffing (24 employees), and the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records (25 employees). (The fiscal 1984 budget adopted by the Board of Education includes a reduction in the Department's staff to 54 employees.) Exhibit III-1, on the following page, shows the Department's current plan of organization. As shown in Exhibit III-2, the Department's staff has decreased from 66 to 56 in the past five years (a 15.2 per cent reduction). Staffing in the Office of the Director increased from 6 to 7 in fiscal 1979 and has remained at that level. During the past five years, the Division of Staffing's staff has been reduced by 20 per cent (from 30 to 24) and the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records' staff has decreased 16.7 per cent (from 30 to 25).

The Department's fiscal 1983 budget is $1,603,786, including $266,404 for the Office of the Director, $713,235 for the Division of Staffing, and $624,147 for the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. Of the Department's total budget, 95.8 per cent ($1,537,016) supports salaries and wages, including $1,485,788 for the salaries of the 56 permanent employees, $36,996 for extended year employment of ten-month employees, part-time clerical assistance, and clerical overtime in the Division of Staffing, and $14,232 for part-time clerical assistance in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. While staffing has decreased during the past five years, the Department's budget has increased by 25.5 per cent from $1,277,862 to $1,603,786, as shown in Exhibit III-3. Almost all of this increase has resulted from increases in employees' salaries.

OTHER MCPS PERSONNEL-RELATED UNITS

In addition to the Department of Personnel Services, seven other MCPS units are responsible for personnel-related functions.

Association Relations

A three-person Department of Association Relations represents the Board of Education in all interactions with the three employees' organizations - the Montgomery County Education Association, the Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel, and the Montgomery County Council of Supporting Services Employees. The Department coordinates the

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

CURRENT PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

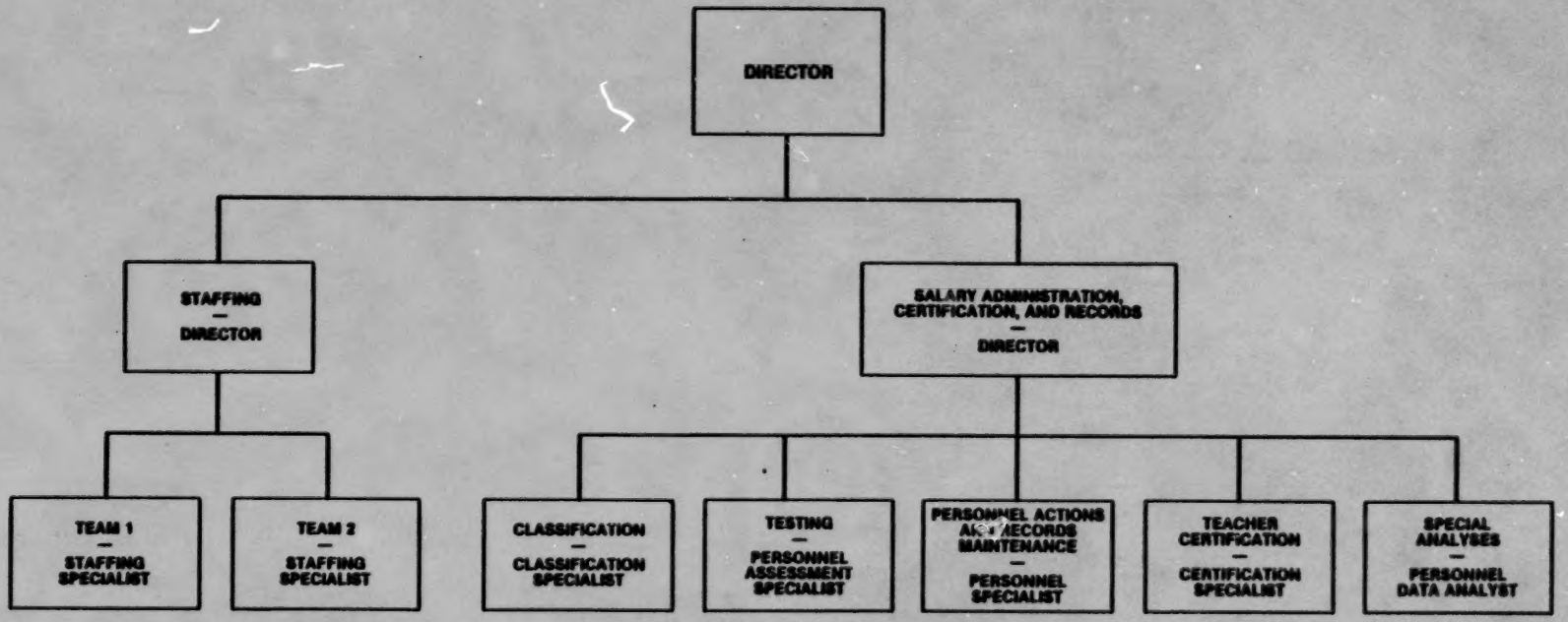

DIRECTOR
STAFFING — DIRECTOR
SALARY ADMINISTRATION, CERTIFICATION, AND RECORDS — DIRECTOR
TEAM 1 — STAFFING SPECIALIST
TEAM 2 — STAFFING SPECIALIST
CLASSIFICATION — CLASSIFICATION SPECIALIST
TESTING — PERSONNEL ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST
PERSONNEL ACTIONS AND RECORDS MAINTENANCE — PERSONNEL SPECIALIST
TEACHER CERTIFICATION — CERTIFICATION SPECIALIST
SPECIAL ANALYSES — PERSONNEL DATA ANALYST

EXHIBIT III-1

Montgomery County Public Schools
Department Of Personnel Services

LEVEL OF PERSONNEL STAFFING(a)
Fiscal Years 1978 Through 1983

Organizational Unit	Fiscal Year						Five-Year Comparison	
	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	FTE's	Per Cent
Office Of The Director	6	7	7	7	7	7	+ 1	+16.7%
Division Of Staffing	30	29	29	29	27	24	- 6	-20.0
Division Of Salary Administration, Certification, And Records	30	27	27	26	26	25	- 5	-16.7
Total	66	63	63	62	60	56	-10	-15.2%

(a)In full-time equivalents.

Montgomery County Public Schools
Department Of Personnel Services

PERSONNEL BUDGET
Fiscal Years 1978 Through 1983

Organizational Unit	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	Five-Year Comparison Funds	Five-Year Comparison Per Cent
Office Of The Director	n.a.	$ 205,091	$ 203,292	$ 218,611	$ 246,902	$ 266,404	n.a.	n.a.
Division Of Staffing	n.a.	609,413	635,907	684,363	718,517	713,235	n.a.	n.a.
Division Of Salary Administration, Certification, And Records	n.a.	483,526	506,636	525,508	586,968	624,147	n.a.	n.a.
Total	$1,277,862	$1,298,030	$1,345,835	$1,428,482	$1,552,387	$1,603,786	+$325,924	+25.5%

n.a. - not available.

EXHIBIT III-3

work of the Board's negotiators' group, work teams, and negotiating teams in formal negotiations with each organization on all matters relating to salaries, wages, hours, and other working conditions. It also helps to administer the resulting agreements, including oversight of the grievance and administrative complaint procedures and the preparation of cases for arbitration or court action. The Director - Association Relations reports to the Superintendent's Executive Assistant.

Human Relations

The Department of Human Relations, with a staff of ten, has responsibility for promoting a "wholesome educational environment of equal opportunity" and for implementing "a programmatic and consultative approach to human relations services for students, employees, and the MCPS community." Its functions include planning, coordinating, and implementing activities which support the Board's commitment to educational equity and equal employment opportunity and enforcing relevant federal laws. The Director - Human Relations also reports to the Superintendent's Executive Assistant.

Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which also reports to the Superintendent's Executive Assistant, provides advice, assistance, and referrals to employees who have problems which affect job performance (such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and physical, mental, or emotional problems). The EAP, with a staff of three, also offers consultation to supervisors of employees with such problems.

Staff Development

A 15-person Department of Staff Development is responsible for providing a comprehensive program of training for all categories of MCPS employees. The Department assists in the identification of training needs, develops and disseminates staff training programs, and monitors and improves courses, programs, and training activities. The Director - Staff Development reports to the Associate Superintendent - Instruction and Program Development. Prior to the reorganization of MCPS in 1978, the Director - Staff Development reported to the Associate Superintendent - Personnel Services.

Financial Services

The Department of Financial Services includes two divisions with personnel-related responsibilities: an 11-person Division of Insurance and Retirement and a 23-person Division of Payroll. The Division of Insurance and Retirement reviews employee benefits,

counsels employees regarding insurance benefits and retirement, administers MCPS's risk management programs, and administers the workers' compensation, tax sheltered annuities, and insurance programs.

The Division of Payroll pays all employees and maintains records of all hours worked, payments, leave, and employee benefits. The Director - Financial Services reports to the Associate Superintendent - Supportive Services.

Ombudsman/Staff Assistant

The Ombudsman/Staff Assistant reports to both the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools. This official assists employees, parents, students, and other citizens who have problems, complaints, information, or suggestions to bring to the attention of school system authorities when no other suitable channels of communication are available. The Ombudsman sometimes serves as a last resort for persons who have exhausted all other avenues of appeal.

OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR - PERSONNEL

The Office of the Director of the Department of Personnel Services currently consists of a budgeted staff of seven: the Department Director, an Assistant Director, a Personnel Assistant, and four clerical positions. (The Superintendent's fiscal 1984 budget request includes support for only three clerical positions.) The Office has certain operational responsibilities, including: recruiting, screening, and selecting employees for administrative and supervisory (A&S) positions; advising the Superintendent and other administrators and supervisors on personnel matters and policies; assisting in the adjudication of grievances; and participating in the labor negotiations process.

The Director acts as an advisor to the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent on personnel matters. He also directs the investigation of sensitive incidents involving employees subject to disciplinary actions and oversees the processes of selecting and assigning A&S personnel.

The Assistant Director oversees the Department's activities in the absence of the Director, aids in the selection of A&S personnel, serves as executive secretary to the MCPS Appointments Committee, and administers the long-term leave program. He also serves as a contact resource on supporting services personnel problems. Currently, the Director and Assistant Director each have a secretary; the Superintendent's fiscal 1984 budget request eliminates one of these positions.

The Personnel Assistant's primary responsibility is to support the A&S recruitment and selection process by maintaining A&S applicant files, scheduling interviews and selection panels, and preparing various written materials related to the A&S selection process. She reports to the Director.

In addition to the secretaries to the Director and Assistant Director, the Office's clerical staff consists of an Office Assistant and an Office System Operator. The Office Assistant works primarily for the Personnel Assistant, typing and proofing acknowledgement, acceptance, and rejection letters and other types of correspondence and maintaining A&S application files. She also spends part of her time maintaining tuberculosis test results, filling in for the Division of Staffing's receptionist, and helping maintain the Division of Staffing's application files. The Office System Operator operates a sophisticated word processor for all sections of the Department. This machine's capabilities and uses are discussed in a later section of this chapter.

MCPS PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Another purpose of this study was to examine the suitability of MCPS's personnel policies and procedures and the adequacy of policy and procedure documentation. This section addresses broad questions pertaining to policy documentation and to the contents of policies and procedures that relate to the entire school system. Specific policies and procedures pertaining to functions of the Office of the Director of Personnel Services are discussed later in this chapter; policies and procedures pertaining to the functions of the Division of Staffing are discussed in Chapter IV; and policies and procedures pertaining to the functions of the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records are discussed in Chapter V.

Policy And Procedure Documentation

A two-volume Policies And Procedures Handbook is intended as a complete collection of all MCPS regulations. The regulations are organized into five sections, including the "400 Series - Personnel Administration and Professional Development," which includes more than 40 personnel-related regulations. Each regulation lists relevant federal laws (if any), state laws, Board of Education policy statements, and procedures for implementing Board policies. The Division of Administrative Analysis and Audits in the Department of Educational Accountability recently was charged with responsibility for updating the Policies And Procedures Handbook; this too was carried out by the Assistant for Regulation Development. The revised handbook contains a new coding system and 12 subsections of personnel regulations: General

Personnel Policies; Ethics; Health and Safety; Recruitment, Employment, and Certification; Assignment, Transfer, and Reduction in Staff; Work Hours and Work Load; Classification of Positions and Salaries; Leaves and Retirements; Evaluation, Tenure, Suspension, and Dismissal; Complaints and Grievances; Personnel Records and Files; and Staff Development.

The agreements negotiated with the three employee organizations also contain authoritative personnel policies and procedures which are often cited and referred to in the course of conducting personnel activities. The articles in these agreements are consistent with Board policies (which may be changed by the Board in the course of negotiations) and are eventually incorporated into the Policies And Procedures Handbook.

Personnel policies and procedures are also found in the memorandums and other documents prepared by the Department of Personnel Services from time to time to explain agreed-upon methods of accomplishing particularly important or frequent transactions. Examples of such documents are the June 4, 1982, memorandum from the Director - Staffing to all principals on "Procedures for Reassignment of Employees, Reduction-in-Force, and Recall" and the March 19, 1990, memorandum from a Staffing Specialist to all principals on the "Professional/Support Staffing Process."

Leave Policy

All employees receive essentially the same leave benefits regardless of their classification and pay grade, although the ten-month employees do not receive annual leave. Permanent employees earn sick leave at the rate of one day per month worked; no limit exists on the maximum accumulation of sick leave. At the time of termination of employment with MCPS, employees with five or more years of experience with MCPS and a satisfactory performance receive termination pay for one-fourth of their accumulated, unused sick leave. Employees may use their sick leave for illness in the immediate family up to a maximum of the number of sick days earned in that year. Confirmation from a physician of the need for absence from work can be required if four consecutive days of leave are used and is mandatory if five or more consecutive sick days are used. Limited paid leave upon the death of a member of an employee's family is available to employees.

Unit members represented by two of the three unions representing MCPS employees (MCEA and MCCSSE) may participate in sick leave banks administered by each union with some MCPS participation and oversight. Members can participate in the sick leave banks by contributing a minimum number of sick days to their bank. If participants have used all of their earned sick leave

and become ill, participants can draw sick leave from the banks to cover their absence upon approval of a committee and meeting certain requirements.

MCPS may also grant extended sick leave beyond earned leave to employees at three-fourths pay. During fiscal 1982, 20 cases were approved under this policy granting a total of 494 extended sick leave days at a cost to MCPS of $25,090. Permanent employees may also take up to three days per year of personal leave to conduct personal business that cannot be conducted outside of the normal workday. Unused personal days can be added to accumulated sick leave.

Twelve-month employees earn annual leave at the rate indicated in the following table:

Years Of Creditable Service	Annual Leave Days Earned
0 - 3	15
4 - 15	20
16 or more	26

An employee may carry over from one year to another no more than ten days of annual leave earned during the previous year.

Maryland state law requires that school systems advance sick leave for the entire school year to all teachers at the beginning of the school year. MCPS expands this policy by advancing both sick and annual leave to all employees. Employees are financially obligated for use of unearned sick or annual leave at the time of employment termination.

Employees may take unpaid leaves of absence of specified maximum durations for child care and adoption and military duty. Employees meeting certain minimum requirements may request unpaid leave for professional improvement of up to one year and for exchange or overseas teaching. MCPS also may grant an employee academic leave with pay for a period of up to one year. Pay for academic leave is established at 50 or 60 per cent of the regular salary; the rate is determined by an employee's commitment to remain an MCPS employee for a minimum of two or three years.

Employees injured in the line of duty and unable to report for duty may be placed on disability leave with full pay. Supporting services employees may receive such leave for a maximum of one year; teachers may receive such leave for up to two years. Any workers' compensation benefits received during this period must be transmitted to MCPS.

Grievance Procedures

MCPS employees have two official mechanisms for appealing personnel decisions and actions with which they disagree: grievance procedures, which apply in disputes pertaining to provisions of the negotiated agreements; and administrative complaints, which apply in disputes pertaining to matters not covered by the agreements. Grievance procedures are described in detail in the agreements. The intent of the procedures is to secure equitable solutions at the lowest possible administrative level and to keep proceedings informal and confidential at all levels. The procedures begin with an "informal process," in which the employee with a grievance and the employee's principal or supervisor attempt to achieve resolution informally through discussion. If that procedure fails, the grievance moves through as many as four levels of the "formal process": written presentation of the grievance to the principal or supervisor; referral of the grievance to the area associate superintendent or other appropriate director; referral of the grievance to the Superintendent; and submission of the grievance to arbitration. Procedures for administrative complaints are similar, but omit the fourth level (arbitration).

Over the past four years, approximately 80 grievances have been filed annually. Approximately 30 administrative complaints were filed annually in fiscal 1981 and fiscal 1982; 69 were filed in fiscal 1980; and 44 were filed in fiscal 1979. Of the 82 grievances filed in fiscal 1982, 62 were filed by members of MCEA and 20 were filed by members of MCCSSE. Half of the grievances (41) were denied; 8 were granted (10 per cent); 10 were settled; 14 were filed but not processed; and 9 were arbitrated. Grieviences were filed during the four-year period pertaining to all articles of both agreements, with most grievances in the past year relating to assignments, involuntary transfers, leaves, personal and academic freedom, and rights of the Board of Education.

Of the 33 administrative complaints filed in fiscal 1982, 18 were filed by members of MCEA, and 15 were filed by members of MCCSSE. Almost half (15) of the complaints were denied; only 3 (less than 10 per cent) were granted; and almost half (15) were filed but not processed. Complaints filed by members of MCEA were distributed across a wide range of subjects. Almost half (7) of the complaints filed by members of MCCSSE pertained to establishing or abolishing positions.

In addition to these official grievance and complaint channels, formal procedures and requirements exist for equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints, and employees sometimes attempt to achieve resolution of concerns by making informal appeals for

assistance to the Department of Human Relations (particularly on EEO matters), the Department of Personnel Services, the Employee Assistance Program, the Ombudsman, or even directly to the Deputy Superintendent or the Superintendent.

Avoidance Of Layoffs And Protection Of Employees

MCPS attempts to avoid layoffs and meet the special needs of long-term and senior employees in a number of ways. First, employees who have worked for MCPS 25 years or more or who are 50 years old or older who are experiencing health problems or other problems that prevent them from continuing to perform their former duties effectively can be reassigned to less demanding and lower-grade positions, ordinarily for a maximum of three years. Employees reassigned in this way continue to receive their former salaries and cost of living increases. Second, when a position is abolished and the incumbent has not worked for MCPS for 25 years or more and is not 50 years old or older, the employee may be reassigned, continue to receive his or her former daily or hourly rate of pay, but not receive cost of living increases until the rate of pay of the new position increases to the rate of pay of the former position, if the new rate is lower. (Such salaries are "red-circled.") Third, if a position is reclassified downward, the employee may continue to receive his or her former salary for one year, at which point it may be necessary to freeze ("red-circle") the employee's salary until the position's salary increases to the level of the employee's salary. Fourth, because the school system sometimes is unable to place all employees in officially allocated positions by the beginning of the school year and because it cannot lay off professional employees who have not received notice within 15 days of the County Council's budget decisions (which are required by the County Charter by May 15), the school system must place all such unplaced employees in "overhire" positions in schools or administrative units until appropriate vacancies occur.

In MCPS's budget documents, the salaries of all employees in all such positions are allocated to the organizational units to which they are assigned.

Alternative Work Hours

In recent years, many organizations have considered or implemented alternative work hour arrangements for the convenience and morale of their employees. These alternatives include flex time (in which employees begin and end their work days earlier or later than normal office hours), compensatory leave (in which employees are compensated for working longer hours than usual by taking off an equal number of hours at a later time), and the four-day work week (in which some or all employees work four 10-hour days rather than five 8-hour days). Four-day work weeks have been instituted in some organizations to save energy by allowing the lowering of thermostats three rather than two days per week.

MCPS policies allow limited flex time (up to a two-hour change in normal start or dismissal times) in some administrative offices, when the employee and supervisor agree that such a change will not affect the office's operations and that it is acceptable to the employee. Flex time is not allowed in schools, which have uniform reporting and dismissal times. MCPS explicitly prohibits comp time in all cases and has not adopted a four-day week.

A&S SELECTION PROCESS

The Director - Personnel Services oversees the recruiting, screening, and selecting of A&S personnel; these efforts are coordinated by a Personnel Assistant who reports to the Director.

The normal process for the filling of vacant A&S positions (which is outlined in MCPS regulation 405-1), except for principals and assistant principals, begins with notifying the Department of Personnel Services of a job vacancy. The existing job description for the position is then sent to the supervisor with the vacancy for his or her review. Upon approval of the job description, the Personnel Assistant prepares an announcement of the vacancy, which is published in the MCPS Bulletin. The Bulletin is sent out to all MCPS schools and offices. If the Department desiring to fill the position, the Director - Personnel Services, and other administrators decide that it is appropriate to do so, the Assistant Director - Personnel Services will arrange for an advertisement in local, regional, or national publications.

Applicants are normally given two weeks to respond to the announcement. Applications are reviewed in the Office of the Director to ensure that applicants meet the minimum qualifications, and acknowledgements of the receipt of applications are mailed. Applications are then screened and scored by a committee to determine who will be interviewed. The committees, whose memberships are determined by the Director - Personnel and the associate superintendent or department director involved, usually consist of a Department of Personnel Services representative and two or three others familiar with the job. Using employment records, applications, and references, the members of the committee independently review and rate each applicant according to a predetermined rating scale tied directly to the unique job requirements. The department involved and the Department of Personnel Services develop this scoring mechanism for each job. The raters score and recommend whether or not someone should be interviewed. A cutoff point is then set to determine the minimum score an individual must obtain to be interviewed.

An interview board, consisting of an associate superintendent, the immediate supervisor of the position being filled, a representative of the Department of Personnel Services, and other MCPS

staff members, interviews each candidate who passes the screening process. The interviews are structured; that is, all candidates are asked the same questions, which are predetermined by the Department of Personnel Services and the supervisors of the position being filled. Interviewers rate the answers to each question, usually from outstanding to definitely unacceptable. These ratings on questions are then converted to numerical scores, totalled for each interviewer for each candidate, and listed on a summary scoring sheet.

The summary scoring sheet, individual interviewer scoring sheets, applications, and personnel files of the top candidates are submitted to the Appointments Committee. The Appointments Committee officially consists of the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent, and the Superintendent's Executive Assistant. The Director and Assistant Director of the Department of Personnel Services attend all meetings but do not vote. Associate superintendents and department directors meet with the committee when candidates for positions in their areas of responsibility are being considered; in practice, all associate superintendents attend almost all meetings. The Appointments Committee advises the Superintendent, who selects a candidate to be recommended to the Board of Education. The Department of Personnel Services sends letters to both successful and unsuccessful candidates after the Board of Education makes the appointment.

The process for selecting principals also involves developing a list of important qualifications required of a principal in a particular school, which is given to candidates and used to develop screening questions. The community and staff of the particular school help develop the list of qualifications. Parents, a teacher, and a supporting services employee of the school also usually serve on the interview panel.

Further, MCPS maintains a list of persons eligible to be promoted to principal. Positions on the eligibility list are determined by the results of an Assessment Center jointly operated by the Department of Staff Development and the Department of Personnel Services. Each year, evaluations of the performance of assistant principals are obtained from their principals, the relevant associate superintendent, and others. These evaluations, along with other information on each assistant principal are assembled and presented to members of the Appointments Committee, who rank the candidates. The top ranked candidates are then sent to the Assessment Center to determine their eligibility for the list.

To be appointed assistant principal or pupil personnel worker, most MCPS employees must go through an internship program, which is also jointly coordinated by the Department of Staff Development and the Department of Personnel Services. Internships are one-year appointments served in the schools or offices where permanent

vacancies exist. They provide on-the-job training, monthly training seminars, and the opportunity to determine whether the intern has the ability and skills to serve in the position permanently. Pupil personnel worker interns are selected in a manner similar to that used for other A&S positions. The selection process for administrative interns consists of two steps. First, using references, applications, and other personnel information, each member of the Appointments Committee ranks all of the applicants. Second, the Department of Staff Development and the Department of Personnel Services conduct an administrative competence session for the top ranked candidates. This session consists of individual and group interviews as well as problem-solving situations. Candidates are scored on their performance and then ranked. The top ranked persons are placed on an "intern list" for two years; the number placed on the list depends on the anticipated openings in the near future.

When an assistant principal position becomes vacant, the Superintendent makes an initial decision either to transfer a current assistant principal or to place an intern in the position. If an intern is to be placed in the position, a selection committee interviews and evaluates individuals from the "intern list." On the basis of this committee's evaluation and the Appointments Committee's recommendation, the Superintendent selects someone from the list to be an intern for one year to fill the vacancy. If the intern completes the program successfully, he or she normally is appointed to an assistant principal position when one becomes available.

AUTOMATED SUPPORT

Automated support for the work performed in the Department of Personnel Services currently includes two data processing systems (the Personnel Master File (PMF), which contains basic information on all permanent employees, and a position control system), one IBM System 6 word processor, and a memory typewriter. Based on an MCPS-wide planning effort that resulted in a long-range automation plan in 1981, a new human resources system - which will contain personnel and payroll modules - has been designated a high priority and is being designed by the Division of Systems Development in the Department of Management Information and Computer Services. Also, three new word processing terminals for the Department of Personnel Services are on order; these will connect with the school system's new computer.

The IBM System 6, which has been used in the Department since 1976, is used for a variety of purposes, including:

- Preparation of the Department's proposed budget

- Maintenance of lists of rescinded positions and generation of letters to incumbents of those positions

- Maintenance of lists of certification contingencies and generation of due-date reports

- Monitoring of certification renewal dates

- Generation of letters that accompany teacher contracts and weekly contract status reports

- Generation of the rank-ordered eligibility lists for entry-level supporting services positions and preparation of eligibility reports

- Generation of involuntary transfer lists

- Generation of voluntary transfer lists and letters to applicants

- Generation of reports on red-circled positions and over-hires

- Generation of lists of reductions in force (RIF's)

- Maintenance of leave information and generation of lists of leave expiration dates

- Maintenance and updating of all position descriptions (which currently are being entered)

- Editing of the teacher evaluation manual

- Monitoring of forms due from new employees

- Maintenance of information on supporting services applicants' test scores

- Lists of part-time employees desiring full-time positions

- Support for surveys

- Support for retirement activities

- Production of correspondence requiring revision and high-quality, error-free final copy.

The Division of Systems Development has been planning for development of the new human resources system during most of 1982. The Division recently prepared a general design document summarizing the new system's requirements, the intended components, relationships among the components, and priorities for development.

The first tasks to be accomplished - which are projected to take until October 1984 - are conversion of the PMF and position control systems to data base. These would constitute the core elements of the new human resources system. In all, 18 "functional modules" are envisioned:

- Position control
- Application, recruitment, referral, employment
- Employee skills and qualifications
- Personnel data maintenance
- Personnel action and tracking
- Personnel reporting
- Lapse and turnover
- Computer-generated potential/eligible retirees report
- Employee evaluation
- Computer-generated out-of-field assignments of teachers
- Computer-administered tests, scoring, and data storage
- Computerized position descriptions
- Salary and classification
- Certification
- Substitutes and temporary employees
- Long-term leave
- System 6 functions
- Interface with other systems.

B - OBSERVATIONS

This section presents observations concerning strengths and opportunities for improvement in the organization and management of personnel functions in MCPS and in the Office of the Director in the Department of Personnel Services. It includes observations about the Department's mission and role, the adequacy of MCPS's personnel policies, the school system's organization and staffing for personnel functions, the Department's management and administration, and the suitability and effectiveness of specific personnel policies that pertain either to the school system or to the Department as a whole.

MISSION AND ROLE

Consensus Is Lacking On The Department's Role And Leadership And Monitoring Responsibilities

The Department of Personnel Services' mission of "providing a comprehensive personnel program" for the entire school system is subject to varying interpretations. Interviews conducted during the course of this study indicated little disagreement as to the areas of school system activity in which the Department does and should play a role, including recruitment, selection, employment, assignment, discipline, position classification and pay plan maintenance, certification, records maintenance, and leave administration. Significant differences of opinion exist, however, regarding the nature of the Department's role in these areas.

Some MCPS officials view the Department's proper role as essentially supportive. These observers contend that, consistent with the school system's emphasis on decentralization, in which as much authority as possible is delegated to the local level, the Department does and should support school, area office, and central office administrators' employment decisions through the performance of preparatory activities (such as recruitment and the collection and analysis of information about job candidates) and administrative follow-up activities (such as processing the forms and information needed to implement managers' decisions). In this view, the authority to make personnel decisions is properly delegated by the Superintendent to line managers; the authority given by MCPS's regulations to the Director - Personnel Services to determine applicants' eligibility for employment, to offer employment, and to make salary commitments (which are exercised in the Director's reviews and approvals of managers' recommendations) is intended to ensure that regulations are followed and that such school system objectives as equal employment opportunity are pursued. But substantial influence over personnel decisions is

exercised by the hiring managers, whose recommendations should be and are overturned by the Department of Personnel Services rarely, according to observers who believe that this philosophy is successfully implemented in MCPS.

Other managers complain that the Department actively exercises its decison-making authority, that the Department's screening activities effectively limit the applicants available for consideration by managers, that the established rules and procedures are so thorough as to minimize local discretion, and that, as a result, line managers in effect serve in a supporting role to the Department, which is in control and which has final say on all matters. According to these observers - who were in the minority of those interviewed and who tended to be concentrated in central departments - individual managers are accountable for their units' performance and, therefore, should select the persons best qualified to perform the work. They contend that under the current system this legitimate power has been taken out of their hands.

The central issue is the extent to which the Department should actively exercise leadership in personnel matters and aggressively enforce established rules and procedures. The Department views its proper role as supportive. It subscribes to the philosophy that line managers should choose the persons with whom they will work (in accordance with established school system rules) and that the Department's responsibility is to implement and advise rather than to develop policies. The Department prefers general policies that allow flexibility in meeting needs under varying circumstances rather than detailed, air-tight rules that eliminate judgment. It appears that in most cases of alleged Departmental refusal to respect line managers' decisions, the Department was attempting to ensure compliance with agreed-upon policies. The problems are more likely to have resulted from inadequate efforts to remind all involved parties of the policies at a sufficiently early stage of the process than from a conscious attempt by the Department to usurp decision-making power.

Additional observations about the Department's leadership and enforcement roles in specific areas are presented in subsequent sections of this report.

Top MCPS Administration Provides Insufficient Emphasis On Line Personnel Management

The lack of consensus on the Department's role illustrates a general issue with respect to the conduct of line personnel functions and the degree to which top MCPS administration emphasizes the proper execution of this line management function. There are a number of areas, presented in specific sections of this report, where evidence supports the need for improvement. In evaluation, there are problems with the timeliness of completion and the quality of the evaluations themselves. There is a reported lack

of documentation by managers when problems of staff performance are presented. There is reported inconsistency in the way decisions are made at the area level with respect to candidates for hire and transfer. There is inconsistency in line managers' followup on use of sick leave and on provision of compensatory time.

It appears that top administrators place insufficient priority on reinforcing the importance of line management's proper function as personnel officers. Top administration does not request exception reports or act on them. Staff development programs for improving the personnel management skills of line managers are voluntary and not tied to management performance.

The leadership role of the Department of Personnel Services as a staff department must be defined in essence by the authority provided and enforced by top MCPS administration. Such delegated authority may not be as strong as necessary.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Basic Organizational Structure Of The Department Of Personnel Services Is Appropriate

The organization of the Department's existing responsibilities into three primary units (the Office of the Director, the Division of Staffing, and the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records) is the most appropriate option. (A subsequent section of this chapter recommends the creation of an additional division to handle responsibilities that are recommended for transfer to the Department.)

An Office of the Director is required to provide overall Departmental leadership and management and is consistent with common practice throughout MCPS and other school systems. The assignment of high-level responsibilities to this Office (such as the provision of advice to the Superintendent, communication with the associate superintendents who head administrative and area offices, and participation in labor negotiations) is effective and heightens the consistency of communications to and from the Department. Participation of the Director (rather than the Division of Staffing) in the A&S selection process is desirable. A&S selections are high-level activities involving top-level school system managers, frequent direct communications with the Superintendent, an understanding and consistent application of top-level school system priorities, and strict confidentiality (which would be more difficult with the participation of larger numbers of staff).

The congregation of all other staffing responsibilities in a single division is effective. Separation of staffing responsibilities by type of position (professional and supporting services) under an earlier organizational structure caused problems in inconsistency, inefficiency, and perceptions of unequal status, as discussed in more detail in the following section. Coordination and consistency in the performance of all tasks related to staffing (including particularly recruiting, screening, referring appropriate candidates to principals and supervisors, and reviewing hiring recommendations) are critical requirements that are best met through placement in one organizational unit. (The organization of the Division of Staffing into teams is discussed in Chapter IV.)

The Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records has responsibility for several related record-keeping, analytical, and improvement functions. Separation of employees responsible for maintaining and ensuring the accuracy of personnel records from those responsible for the recruitment and placement function (in the Division of Staffing) provides an important balance. It is also appropriate to separate staff responsible for determining needed procedural improvements from those responsible for day-to-day operations and to separate the establishment of qualification standards from the application of those standards. The testing program (which resides in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records) is closely related to the Division of Staffing's activities in screening applicants, but requires independence to ensure that needed improvements are made and that test results are given adequate attention. Furthermore, the Personnel Assessment Specialist is also responsible for reviewing the adequacy of the Division of Staffing's efforts (which requires organizational separation) and for assisting in other activities carried out in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records, such as certification analyses. One option would be to separate the record-keeping and analytical responsibilities of the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records, but such a change would require an additional management position. Moreover, no management problems in the Division are clearly a result of the Division's current size and composition.

The major alternative to the existing arrangement would be to organize the Department by types of positions to be filled or by types of offices served. This option is less desirable than the current arrangement because it requires duplicative overhead and positions and tends to cause inconsistencies and inefficiencies, as discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Consolidation Of The Professional And Supporting Services Personnel Departments Has Improved Sensitivity To Differences In Treatment, But Continued Discrepancies Concern Some Officials

The 1978 MCPS reorganization merged the Department of Professional Personnel and the Department of Supporting Services Personnel, which had been grouped with the Department of Staff Development under an Associate Superintendent - Personnel Services. The major purposes of this reorganization were to reduce staffing by eliminating duplications of effort in the two departments and to provide a structure for equalizing the treatment of professional and supporting services personnel.

The consolidation has made possible a reduction in the number of Personnel employees, which has gradually declined from 66 in 1978 to 56 in 1983. All recruitment, selection, disciplinary, and leave processing functions for both professional and supporting services employees are now handled by the unified Division of Staffing, and all testing, postemployment processing, and record-keeping functions for both groups are handled by the unified Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. Support for all A&S hiring is provided by the Office of the Director. All staff members in both Divisions participate in the processing of both professional and supporting services employees, although Division of Staffing employees continue to specialize to some extent in screening and referral activities (as discussed in Chapter IV).

The consolidation also appears to have heightened sensitivity to differences in the treatment of professional and supporting services employees. Many interviewees volunteered concern about the status of supporting services employees as "second-class citizens." Many of these interviewees pointed out that this is an MCPS-wide phenomenon that is largely attitudinal (expressed in how supporting services employees are treated), as well as procedural. Variations in treatment cited by interviewees included differences in the rules applied to high-level supporting services employees, teachers, and administrators and differences in the school system's responsiveness to supporting services and professional employees. Interviewees also recognize that some procedural differences are necessary because of variations in job and hiring circumstances and that such differences are officially sanctioned by adopted regulations and articles in the negotiated agreements (indicating acceptance by the Montgomery County Council of Supporting Services Employees). For example, differences in certification requirements (required by teachers, but not for supporting services employees) and in the frequency and distribution of hiring actions (relatively clustered for teachers, spread out over the year for supporting services positions) make procedural variations sensible and efficient. At the same time, actions have been taken in the past few years to standardize some aspects of

the hiring procedures across categories. For example, validated tests are administered to both professional and supporting services applicants; screening and interviewing procedures (involving structured questions and evaluation forms) are more similar for the two groups than previously; and both higher-level supporting services positions and A&S positions are advertised, with screened applicants interviewed and evaluated by panels chosen according to established criteria.

The Levels Of Supervision Currently Existing In The Department Are Excessive

The Department's Assistant Director position appears to be responsible for functions that can be assigned to other positions. The Division Directors are capable of managing their units on a day-to-day basis, thereby eliminating the need for day-to-day management by the Assistant Director. The Assistant Director's other responsibilities - acting for the Director in his absence, serving as executive secretary to the A&S Appointments Committee, assisting the Director with A&S recruitment and hiring activities, serving as leave administrator, chairing various special committees, and serving as the first level of appeal for supporting services employees - could be reassigned to the Division Directors and other employees in the Office of the Director without creating unmanageable workloads.

The Department's Staff Is Generally Competent And Has Appropriate Skills, Training, And Experience

Interviews with Department of Personnel Services staff and reviews of staff members' backgrounds indicate that the staff's knowledge, skill, and experience are generally commensurate with the Department's work requirements and that the staff are conscientious in attempting to fulfill their responsibilities. Staff members have been selected for their positions according to established competitive school system procedures, thereby increasing the likelihood of hiring appropriately qualified persons. Most staff members have held personnel responsibilities for considerable periods of time and have gained substantial amounts of relevant knowledge and experience. Most interviewees in schools and other user offices commented favorably on the staff's knowledge, skill, conscientiousness, and willingness and ability to provide needed assistance. The staff's capabilities compare favorably with those in other school systems studied by the consultants. A small number of staff members appear to lack the full degree of skill and energy one would hope for on a consistent basis; such problems should be addressed through supervision, performance evaluations, and development of steps for improvement or replacement where necessary.

Separation Of The EAP And Retirement Counseling From The Department Is Inefficient And Confusing

Keeping the EAP separate from the Department because of requirements that EAP records be maintained in strict confidence is not a valid justification. Physical separation (including particularly the ability to reach the EAP offices without going through other offices) is more critical than organizational placement. Further, specific procedures can be officially adopted and strictly enforced to ensure confidentiality and separation of EAP records.

The work of the retirement counseling unit (consisting of a Retirement Counselor and an Account Clerk) also relates more to the Department of Personnel Services. The Department orients new employees to insurance and retirement options, assists new employees in selecting plans and completing forms, supplies needed information to and from the Personnel Master File (PMF), and coordinates compensation surveys which provide needed benefit information.

The Current Placement Of The Department Of Staff Development And The Special And Alternative Education In-Service Training Unit Inhibits Integration With Personnel Functions

The current placement of the Department of Staff Development ensures attention to training in instruction-related areas. There are a number of disadvantages with this placement, however. First, there is less direct support for training in noninstructional areas. Although the general consensus of users is that the quality of training for supporting services personnel has not decreased since 1978, the Department of Personnel Services has more direct access to information on the skills required of supporting services personnel and on current deficiencies in these skills. The balance and coordination among training for the different personnel groupings are also more logically functions of the Department of Personnel Services, which is responsible for providing a balance of services for all personnel, while the Office of Instruction and Program Development has specific instructional purposes to achieve. Finally, there is a close link between manpower planning and training. To the extent that manpower planning belongs in personnel, it may be awkward to have staff development in the Office of Instruction and Program Development.

The existence of a separate In-Service Training Unit in the Office of Special and Alternative Education reduces coordination and efficiency and increases the need for duplicative leadership and supervision. While many of the training needs of special and alternative education staff are unquestionably specialized and

unique, the overall processes of determining manpower and training needs, of planning and organizing staff development activities, and of conducting such activities are common across subject areas and would benefit from closer coordination.

These observations about deficiencies in the current placement of staff development responsibilities are based on analyses performed in the course of CMP's study of MCPS's personnel services. The Division of Administrative Analysis and Audits is beginning a MORE study of staff development as this report is submitted. This report's observations and recommendations pertaining to staff development should be taken into consideration in the staff development study, and final decisions about organizational location of staff development functions should be made upon completion of that study.

Other Personnel-Related Functions Warrant Continued Autonomy

Continuing to separate the Department of Association Relations from the Department of Personnel Services facilitates direct communication between the Superintendent and his chief negotiator. The adversarial relationship that often develops with employee organizations in negotiations would detract from the Department of Personnel Services' ability to work harmoniously with employees in providing employment services. The counterargument, which seems less compelling, is that the separation of units as small as the Department of Association Relations promotes organizational fragmentation and that the two departments (Association Relations and Personnel Services) must work together closely in preparing for and conducting negotiations.

The Department of Human Relations performs a number of programmatic functions unrelated to responsibilities of the Department of Personnel Services. These functions include the development of human relations training courses and instructional units. The other primary role of the Department of Human Relations - monitoring and enforcing of EEO laws and regulations - would be inappropriately placed in one of the primary units it is charged with monitoring (the Department of Personnel Services).

The responsibilities of the Division of Payroll are primarily financial in nature, thereby requiring close working relationships with other units within the Department of Financial Services. Further, the separation of Payroll from Personnel Services provides a check and balance, which is critical. Current difficulties in the transmission of data from Personnel Services to Payroll, as identified in the MORE Report On The Payroll System, can be best addressed through improvements in procedures and automated systems.

The Ombudsman/Staff Assistant devotes the majority of his time to assisting the Board of Education. Also, the Department of Personnel Services is directly involved in the grievance and administrative complaint procedures; a conflict of interest could therefore ensue if the units were combined.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Overall Level Of Personnel Services Can Be Improved

Users of personnel services vary in their assessments of the quality of service provided by the Department of Personnel Services. Although the general assessment is positive, there are some general areas of concern. First, the availability of Personnel staff is an issue. Time in meetings, delays in responding to telephone calls, and unavailability due to vacations during part of the summer are cited as examples of problems with level of service. Second, the coordination of information within Personnel is an issue. Examples include double assignments of personnel, lack of knowledge of applicants who are on file, inconsistent treatment of requests among specialists, and presention of candidates for review who are not fully qualified. Third, the communication of policies and procedures is cited as insufficient - particularly the accuracy of the transfer list and the roles and responsibilities of Personnel and of principals.

These instances of service concerns are serious enough to warrant remedial action, but should be considered in the context of general satisfaction with personnel services.

The Department Demonstrates Competence And Has Made Significant Improvements In Effectiveness And Efficiency

The Department's managers and staff are notably professional, well qualified, experienced, and conscientious. The procedures that have been developed for implementing policies and meeting school system needs are generally sound, well thought out, detailed, clear, comprehensive, and workable. The Department carries out some functions rarely found in school systems, such as the development and validation of tests for applicants. In several areas, the Department has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations, for example, by instituting biannual position announcements and eligibility lists for entrylevel supporting services positions (reducing the amount of work and delays involved in running numerous competitions for individual positions) and by continuously enhancing the objectivity and validity of screening and selection instruments.

The Department Is Insufficiently Assertive In Addressing MCPS's Personnel Needs

A common perception expressed by MCPS officials in the course of this study was that the Department of Personnel Services tends to react to problems, issues, and changing circumstances as they arise, rather than anticipate them in advance and provide leadership and assistance in preparing to meet them when they arrive. For example, the Department currently does not perform long-range manpower planning (projecting levels of student enrollment, required employees, and numbers of persons to be hired for the next few years based on relevant data and past trends).

Further, the Department concentrates on performance of its standard functions, such as hiring, while giving little attention to special needs, such as assisting with the development of statements of responsibility for positions in newly established organizational units. Finally, the Department has been insufficiently assertive in fulfilling its monitoring responsibilities, as discussed in more detail in subsequent sections. Apparent reasons for this are the time required for such review, the Department's support of decentralized authority, in which it facilitates and supports rather than leads and directs, and the lack of pressure from the Superintendent to have this information and to use it in evaluating principals and other managers.

The Effectiveness Of Departmental Management Is Hampered By The Absence Of Goals And Objectives That Can Be Quantified, Measured, Prioritized, And Used In Planning And Tracking Work

The Department's annual budget request does include objectives, but most of these are simply statements of activities and responsibilities (for example, "Conduct classification studies and maintain position guides"). The Department has developed no written performance measures (such as time standards for processing documents or accomplishing other common tasks) or specific statements of goals and schedules for special projects (such as projects initiated to improve the selection process, the involuntary transfer process, or the position control system). As a result, the Department's managers (including the Director, Assistant Director, and Division Directors) do not receive routine performance reports indicating work and special project status and do not submit to the Superintendent regular management reports of the Department's activities. The only reports of Departmental progress and projected workload found in this study were ad hoc responses to Board of Education inquiries. Moreover, the absence of clear statements of priority among the Department's goals, objectives, and responsibilities inhibits efforts to ensure that staff members devote sufficient time and attention to more important functions and minimize time devoted to less important activities. In a recent report prepared by a committee of the Secondary School Administrators' Association, principals have complained

that staff members in the Division of Staffing are not always available when needed and that staff members sometimes seem to be occupied with tasks that are less important than the assistance desired by the principals. The lack of agreed-upon lists of priorities for staff responsibilities (which take into consideration the needs of all client groups) increases the potential for disagreement over what the staff members should do first when faced with more demands than can be met in a given period of time.

The Department's Efficiency Is Impeded By Deficiencies In Automated Support

The primary deficiencies in the current Personnel Master File (PMF) system are that it lacks documentation; it is not sufficiently flexible (and, therefore, it is being converted into a data base system); current data entry procedures are redundant; various reference cards used in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records must be prepared manually rather than automatically (as discussed in greater detail in Chapter V); and various flaws in the system create difficulties for the Division of Payroll (as described in the MORE "Report on the Payroll System"). The current position control system yields printouts that are used extensively by the Division of Staffing's two Personnel Assistants who monitor position control. The main deficiencies of this system are that it is not sufficiently timely (with data entered overnight rather than at the time significant actions are effected and with reports printed out only every other week); it is not adequately accessible to all officials who require up-to-date knowledge of position status; and it is not connected with an automated budget system which allocates positions as budget decisions are made.

Most of the IBM System 6 functions are appropriate uses of word processing that improve the Department's efficiency and the quality of its products. Greater use could be made of word processing, however. In particular, the Department sends a large volume of form letters to applicants and employees annually and drafts many letters requiring frequent revision, almost all of which could be efficiently prepared on word processors.

The memory typewriter in the Office of the Director has limited capabilities. It has only 50 storage slots, lacks a screen for reviewing what is stored, requires individual entry of information that varies by letter, cannot generate multiple letters from entered mailing lists and letter text, and is slow. As a result, many form letters (such as letters to unsuccessful applicants for A&S positions) must be typed individually, and documents requiring many revisions and letter-perfect final form must be retyped frequently, substantially reducing the staff's productivity.

Automated support currently is lacking in several important areas of personnel activity, including access to applicants' files when vacancies occur, manpower planning information and analyses, information about MCPS employees' skills, the results of performance evaluations, and applicants' test scores. The absence of a simple system containing basic information on applicants (name, type of position sought, areas of certification, and experience) forces Division of Staffing staff members and hiring supervisors to search the files manually or to use lists maintained by staff which are incomplete and inconsistent. Also, the absence of a complete list of active applicants causes supervisors to overlook qualified applicants whose files happen to be out of the file cabinets when a search is made.

The absence of automated support for manpower planning impedes the performance of analyses and projections which would improve the school system's ability to anticipate its personnel needs and to adjust recruitment, assignment, and counseling activities accordingly. Similarly, the lack of automated information about the results of performance evaluations increases the difficulty of monitoring supervisors' evaluation efforts, a role recommended for strengthening elsewhere in this chapter.

Inadequate access to information about current employees' education, training, credentials, experience, and skills inhibits efforts to identify persons already employed by the school system who might fill new, redefined, or vacated positions in order to provide opportunities for appropriate new challenges for employees facing fewer opportunities for promotion and in order to reduce pressures to lay off employees.

Insufficient automation of information about applicants' scores on aptitude and proficiency tests impedes increased use of and emphasis on such evidence of ability in selecting persons to interview.

Improved automated support for personnel functions clearly is desirable to improve the timeliness and accuracy of information and to reduce the amount of inefficient manual activity. Designation of the human resources system as a top priority and the movement to an interactive system are important positive steps. At the same time, however, some concerns about the approach being taken to developing the new system deserve attention.

First, it does not appear that communications between users in the Department of Personnel Services and the system's developers have been sufficiently frequent or cohesive to yield clear understandings of needs and priorities. Most meetings have been held between developers and individuals or small groups in the Department; it appears that little effort has been devoted to discussion and analysis among key managers and staff from all parts of the Department. Such deficiencies in communications are likely to

impede understanding of specific system requirements and priorities. Improvements in the frequency and scope of communications apparently has been made in recent weeks; such improvements should be continued throughout the design, development, and implementation work.

Second, the design work appears to be proceeding at a slow pace. For months after the designation of staff to develop the system, Department of Personnel Services managers were contacted infrequently and received little information about progress. The September "general design" document contains much of the information prepared by the Department of Personnel Services during the long-range planning effort in 1980; it appears that little conceptual progress has been made since then in some areas.

Finally, while the planning efforts have identified most needs for improved automated support for personnel functions, some important needs are being given insufficient emphasis, the need for all projected components has not been established, and all options for providing what the Department needs have not been thoroughly explored. For example, although the PMF and position control are clearly high-priority needs, insufficient consideration has been given to putting simple information about applicants on word processing in the near future to facilitate access to the files. The intention of making this component more elaborate than necessary (by including more information on applicants than is needed in facilitating identification of relevant candidates) is resulting in long delays in providing support capable of improving staffing procedures quickly and significantly. Insufficient attention has been given to the need for record-keeping and analysis pertaining to employees' skills, performance evaluations, and applicants' test scores, all of which are needed for reasons discussed in preceding paragraphs. Further, the need for automated support of all intended modules has been inadequately analyzed. The statements of "Cost/Benefit Considerations" in some of the module descriptions are uninformative, unconvincing, or missing. For example, the descriptions of half of the envisioned modules (lapse and turnover, potential and eligible retirees, salary and classification, certification, substitutes and temporary employees, extended year employment, leave, and System 6 functions and interface with other systems) omit any discussion of potential costs and benefits.

Opportunity For Continuing User Input Is Limited

Although there are many informal means for presenting reactions to personnel services, the Department of Personnel Services does not have a users committee which is sufficiently representative of all users and which meets on a regular basis to assess personnel services and to look for opportunities for improvement. A Liaison Committee has been meeting monthly but includes only principals, and some principals apparently believe that it does not represent the range of principal views.

The Department's Physical Facilities Are Deficient In Several Respects

Although the Department's offices in the Educational Services Center are centrally located and generally provide sufficient office space, they are inadequate to support fully the Department's operations in several ways.

First, the reception area for applicants is noisy and does not offer sufficient privacy either to applicants or to Departmental employees. The reception area, used by job applicants for waiting and filling out applications and forms, is actually the hallway immediately outside the Director's and Assistant Director's offices and leading to the Division of Staffing's offices. Because of the traffic through this area, completing applications is difficult. Moreover, the location of the reception area could allow applicants to overhear private conversations in the Department's offices.

Second, the individual offices of Department employees engaged in interviewing and counseling are inadequately sound-proofed. It is possible to overhear conversations conducted in adjacent offices, thereby distracting individuals and limiting the degree of privacy available for confidential interviews.

Third, the Department's location allows its offices to be used as a thoroughfare for MCPS employees traveling from one part of the building to another. Use of the hallways in the Department by nondepartmental personnel could lead to inadvertent transmittal of confidential employee information.

MCPS PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MCPS's Personnel Policies Are Comprehensive, Consistent, And Clear, But Misunderstandings Are Apparent In Some Areas

The major problems with MCPS's personnel policies are misunderstandings by some managers and staff and inconsistency in updating the Handbook. Some interviewees complained about problems resulting from undocumented policies, but in following up on such allegations, documentation was found in each case, whether in the Handbook, in one or all of the negotiated agreements, or in a memorandum from an appropriate authority (such as the Superintendent, the Director - Personnel, or the Director - Staffing).

MCPS is conscientious about documenting its policies, inincluding its personnel policies. The two-volume Policies And Procedures Handbook and the negotiated agreements with the three employee organizations cover a wide range of personnel subjects; no one interviewed during the course of this study believed that any important area was unaddressed. The Handbook groups relevant

federal, state, and school system laws and policies, thereby providing a unified source of direction. No regulations pertinent to this study were found to be inconsistent. To ensure consistency, the policy-making process includes systematic examination of relevant laws and regulations. Further, the policy-making process provides opportunities for widespread participation by school system employees and citizens, thereby resulting in a relatively high degree of support for the policies that are adopted.

One possible problem is the quantity and length of the personnel policies, which may discourage careful examination by managers. The Department has offered workshops on policies, but turnover among managers, the infrequent use of many policies by some managers (for example, those who hire infrequently), and continuing policy changes reduce the effectiveness of such efforts. Some managers complained about the absence of documented policies in areas that are in fact covered in the Handbook or in the agreements. Some expressed concern about the substance of particular policies, which turned out to be based on misinterpretations. Some legitimate concerns were expressed regarding specific policies, however, as discussed in later sections of this report.

Until recently, efforts to incorporate the most recent versions of all regulations in the Policies And Procedures Handbook have been inconsistent. The copies of the Handbook inspected in this study contained combinations of up-to-date regulations, out-of-date regulations, and resolutions which had not been put into the standard regulation format. The recent updating activity by the Assistant for Regulation Development involved incorporating the most recently adopted statements in each area (such as the articles of the negotiated agreements), eliminating redundant material, reorganizing policies into coherent categories, and adopting a new coding scheme to support this categorization. The contents of the Handbook now have been placed on word processing disks, which should facilitate more responsive updating efforts in the future.

Central MCPS Monitoring Of Sick Leave Is Lacking

Although sick leave is subject to abuse, no department within MCPS monitors the use of sick leave centrally. In fact, MCPS does not maintain and distribute to managers summary information on sick leave taken. Managers are expected to ensure the reasonable use of sick leave by the employees they supervise but are not provided all of the tools necessary to do the job adequately. Without monitoring sick leave centrally, MCPS management has no way to determine whether sick leave is being used properly or being abused or whether supervisors are properly monitoring sick leave use.

The MCPS Policy Of Advancing Annual And Sick Leave Is Unusual And Appears To Be Costly

As noted earlier in this chapter, MCPS advances annual and sick leave to all employees at the beginning of each school year. Maryland state law requires that MCPS advance sick leave to teachers, but no legal requirement necessitates the advancing of sick leave to other employees or the advancing of annual leave to any employees.

This leave policy, which is now a part of all negotiated agreements, is unusual and appears costly to MCPS. Although detailed cost figures could not be obtained during the study, it is estimated that former employees owe approximately $100,000 to MCPS at any one time for leave taken but not earned. This amount includes monies owed for sick, annual, and academic leave. Because some of the $100,000 will be paid back, the true cost to MCPS is less than $100,000 annually.

Department of Financial Services officials believe that the monies lost by MCPS for advanced leave will increase because of recent changes in retirement plans. Until recently, MCPS and state retirement plans required employees to contribute some of their own funds. If terminating employees owed MCPS money for advanced leave, MCPS could collect employee contributions from the retirement plans of the employees (rather than return the funds to the employees). MCPS collected an estimated $20,000 to $35,000 annually in this manner. The new retirement plan, however, is noncontributory for most employees, thereby reducing MCPS's ability to obtain advanced leave reimbursements as more and more employees enter the new retirement plan.

Disability Leave And Workers' Compensation Claims Are Insufficiently Analyzed

As noted in the MORE Report on the Payroll System, the maintenance of separate claim review systems for disability leave and workers' compensation, delays in making decisions regarding compensation, and the need to approve or disapprove disability leave promptly may be creating problems for employees and for the school system. In some cases, employees may continue to receive their salaries (on disability leave) under the assumption that the school system will be compensated later; if compensation is denied, the school system must seek reimbursement from the employees. In some cases, this request for reimbursement may place difficult financial strains on the employees; in others, the school system may never receive reimbursement for salaries already paid.

Neither the Department of Financial Services nor the Department of Personnel Services has undertaken analyses to determine the extent of these potential problems. Apparently, no systematic records are being maintained. Requests for information (on the

number of cases in which disability leave had been approved but workers' compensation had been denied, on the amount of reimbursement received by the school system, and on the amounts unrecovered by the school system) were unfulfilled.

The A&S Selection, Grievance, And Administrative Complaint Processes Are Thorough

A&S selection processes are sufficiently formal (including structured interviews, predetermined scoring criteria, and scoring without consultation) to ensure fair treatment to all candidates. Adequate flexibility is provided to ensure that individual appointments meet the overall needs of the school system. The use of multiple member committees increases the probability that candidates' qualifications and skills will be evaluated fairly. Further, the use of internships and assessment centers for screening and on-the-job training are conceptually sound approaches.

The procedures for grievances and administrative complaints described in the negotiated agreements and MCPS's commitment to due process provide all employees with fair opportunities to have their cases heard. The specification of time limits for each level of appeal minimizes the possibility of delay. The structure of the process provides access to high-level officials but encourages resolution at lower levels if possible. Formal procedures are specified to ensure equity in treatment and to provide agreed-upon ground rules if necessary, but encouragement is given to informal processes.

Some persons interviewed in this study believe that MCPS's provision of many avenues of appeal is unnecessary, timeconsuming, and inefficient. Most interviewees point out, however, that the provision of due process and full opportunity to have one's case reconsidered are important elements of MCPS's humane treatment of employees, contributing to the school system's attractiveness as an employer, resulting in the ability to attract and retain the best possible employees, and providing needed protection of employees' rights, regardless of the time required. The provision of a local equal employment opportunity (EEO) appeals process is supported by most observers, who point out that opportunities to discuss EEO concerns informally within the school system lead to quicker, more successful, and less costly and potentially disruptive resolutions than would a larger number of formal lawsuits, which probably would result from the elimination of the school system's existing EEO appeals process. Some interviewees argue that although a separate EEO appeal opportunity is necessary, the existence of yet another avenue of appeal - the Ombudsman - is superfluous. The Ombudsman hears appeals on a wide range of concerns beyond EEO matters, however, and does provide one last opportunity before disciplinary action is taken. The persons who might be most burdened by the provision of this additional opportunity (the Superintendent, members of the Board of Education, and

the Ombudsman himself) have not expressed concern about the added workload, however, and seem to value the provision of a court of last resort. Finally, if an appeal is rejected, there can be little doubt that the negative conclusion is warranted.

Current Policies On Downgraded Positions, Abolished Positions, Overhires, And Reassigned Senior Employees And The Placement Of The Costs Of Such Positions In Individual Departments' Budgets Are Appropriate

MCPS's current policies of protecting the rights of employees by making reassignments when positions are eliminated, temporarily overhiring when it is not possible to place all employees by the opening of the school year, and reassigning senior employees (those who have been with the school system at least 25 years or who are at least 50 years old) are consistent with the school system's tradition of humane treatment, contribute to the school system's image as a reasonable employer (which enhances the ability to attrach high-quality staff), and are appropriate and warranted. At the same time, the practice of limiting the terms of such special assignments eliminates the danger of carrying extra costs for long periods of time. The practices of limiting previous salary levels in downgraded positions to one year, requiring agreements to retire at specific times (for reassigned senior employees having health or other problems that reduce their effectiveness), and attempting to place and make good use of employees in overhire status are sensible and cost-effective and should be continued.

The allocation of salaries for overhires and employees in red-circled positions to the organizational units in which these employees reside increases expenditures in those units, sometimesto levels above budgeted amounts. This procedure does not appear to cause problems, however. Board of Education members and relevant school system officials are aware of the placements of such employees and understand that the associated higher expenditures are beyond the individual managers' control. The organizational units are not penalized for overexpenditure through reductions in other line items, the managers are not negatively evaluated for overspending, and in some cases adjustments made at the mid-year budget review eliminate the discrepancies. Adoption of an alternative budget and financial reporting strategy - clustering the cost of all red-circled positions and overhires in one category - would eliminate an indication of the employees' current placement and might increase the employees' vulnerability during budget cuts, which would run counter to MCPS's overall tradition of humane treatment of its employees.

Flex Time And The Four-Day Workweek Appear To Have Limited Application In MCPS

Overall, there is little interest in four-day workweeks or more extensive use of flex time in MCPS. Because schools are

operated on a five-day-a-week basis, the extensive use of flextime or four-day workweeks in the MCPS does not appear feasible.

Although Compensatory Leave Is Forbidden, It Is Used Occasionally In Some School System Offices

Although the negotiated agreements and corresponding MCPS regulations explicitly prohibit the use of compensatory leave, it is apparent that in some organizational units professional employees (including higher-level supporting services employees) are allowed to take time off without using annual leave after working more than 40-hour weeks. MCPS managers are divided on the suitability of this practice. Some managers believe that extra effort should be recognized through the use of comp time, if an office's workload declines after an especially busy period, for example. Other managers argue that professionals are hired to fulfill specified responsibilities which often require more than 40 hours per week and that the use of compensatory leave implies an hourly wage and is unprofessional. Some observers point out that compensatory leave often is unfair, in that it most often is given to employees who have worked an unusual number of additional hours in a relatively short period, while other employees are unrewarded for the smaller numbers of extra hours per week put in all year long (which are less visible but which may total more than those put in by other employees during intensive periods of activity).

Compensatory leave practices vary among organizational units in the school system. Some units never allow it, some units have developed their own unwritten guidelines to provide it on a fair and consistent basis among their employees, and other units grant it occasionally without reference to guidelines, sometimes resulting in charges of inequitable treatment.

C - RECOMMENDATIONS

This section recommends approaches to effecting needed improvements in MCPS's personnel policies and procedures, in the organization, staffing, and management of the Department of Personnel Services, and in the Office of the Director.

MISSION AND ROLE

The Department Of Personnel Services Should Strengthen Its Supporting Mission While Preserving The Decision-Making Authority Of Line Managers

The Department of Personnel Services should concentrate on providing support to school principals and administrative unit heads, who serve as the personnel officers for their respective organizations, rather than assume more decision-making authority in personnel matters. This supporting role should be strengthened, however, through at least four specific programs or actions recommended in this report. These include the following:

- More timely, succinct communication of personnel policies and policy changes to managers
- An organizational structure which includes staff development and counseling support
- Strengthened manpower planning
- An emphasis on monitoring performance evaluations and other management activities to ensure accountability in following personnel practices and procedures.

The implementation of these recommendations should rigorously support the personnel management of schools and other administrative units by providing and communicating an operating framework with direction through planning and feedback on proper execution of policies and procedures. The Department can then increase its initiative in anticipating and preparing for emergency needs, issues, or problems requiring new or modified procedures.

The Superintendent Should Emphasize Line Personnel Management And Use The Department Of Personnel Services To Monitor The Quality Of This Work

The strengthened support mission of the Department of Personnel Services will require the emphasis and priority of the Superintendent and other top administrators. These actions should include:

- Requiring that all principals and other line managers have an up-to-date working knowledge of personnel policies and procedures

- Ensuring that confusion or inconsistency in carrying out policies and procedures is identified and clarified

- Requiring annual manpower plans

- Requiring and using results of evaluations in assessing performance of line managers

- Requiring other Department of Personnel Services' reports to monitor compliance of line managers with personnel policies and procedures; using these reports in assessing performance of line managers

- Requiring staff development programs for line managers who need to develop additional knowledge and skills in personnel management.

The Department Should Continue To Strive For Comparable Personnel Services For Supporting Services And Professional Employees

The Department's commendable progress in reducing discrepancies in employee treatment across categories should be continued. To the extent that differences in job requirements, certification requirements, salary structures, and other such elements allow, procedures should be standardized. The Division of Staffing's movement toward a generalist approach (as discussed in Chapter IV) is another important step in reducing procedural and attitudinal differences.

The Department Should Provide A More Timely, Succinct Description And Communication Of Personnel Policies

The Department should should be assigned a stronger leadership role in developing and continuously improving personnel policies and procedures and in rigorously enforcing adherence to relevant laws, regulations, and agreed-upon procedures. While the school system's personnel policies are comprehensive and clear, misunderstandings indicate the need for access by managers and staff to a more succinct summary of key policy points and corresponding agreed-upon procedures. One of the Department's special projects in the less active winter months should be to produce such a digest, to be updated at least annually. The digest should summarize key points from all policy and procedures documents (including the Policies And Procedures Handbook, the negotiated agreements, and Departmental memorandums), address the needs of managers who require quick access to readable explanations, minimize detail (which can be obtained by consulting the other sources

when needed), provide clear references to relevant detailed policy and procedure statements, and group related policies and procedures into categories that reflect their use in practice.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Department's Organizational Structure Should Be Modified To Provide Services Which Meet Current And Projected School System Needs With Maximum Efficiency And Effectiveness

The current organizational structure of the Department of Personnel is effective for providing personnel services to MCPS. Modest recommended changes are apparent, however, that can further strengthen the capacity of the Department of Personnel Services to meet current and future MCPS requirements. These include improvements in:

- The reporting relationship of the Department
- The scope of Departmental functions
- The supervisory structure within the Department
- The level of Departmental staffing.

Recommendations for each of these areas are presented in the following paragraphs. The implementation of these recommendations will strengthen Departmental focus and working relationships and permit greater efficiency in providing services.

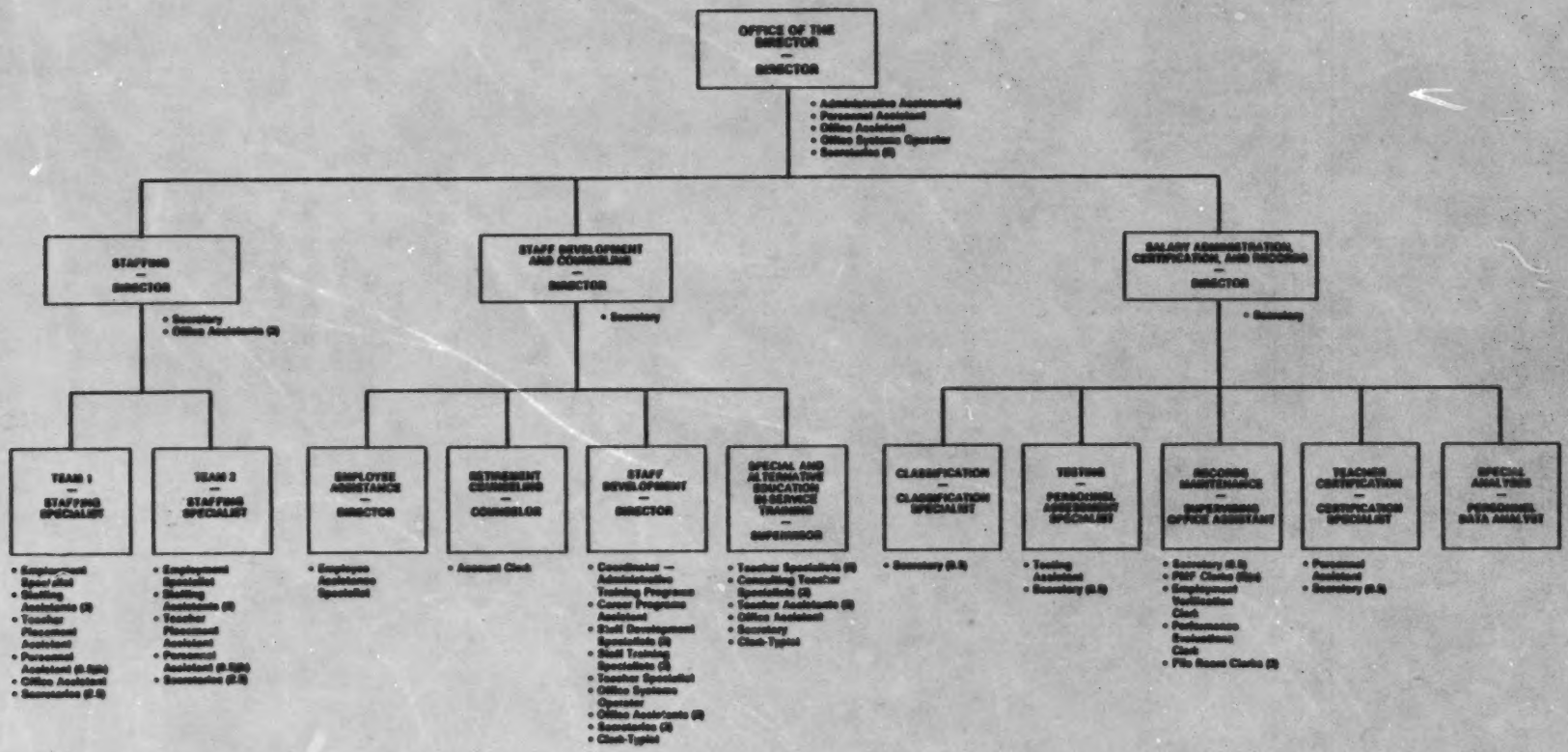
All proposed organizational changes in the Department of Personnel Services are summarized in Exhibit III-4 (Proposed Plan Of Organization) on the following page. The recommended changes are discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter and in Chapters IV and V.

The Department Of Personnel Should Continue To Report To The Superintendent Through The Executive Assistant

The current organizational arrangement is operating effectively. The Director of Personnel Services has access to the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent whenever necessary. The Executive Assistant acts on behalf of the Superintendent regarding more routine personnel matters. No evidence exists to support the substitution of another arrangement at this time.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

PROPOSED PLAN OF ORGANIZATION



(a)The Administrative Assistant is an optional new position which could assume responsibility for some of the functions currently performed by the Assistant Director — Personnel Services.
(b)One Personnel Assistant would conduct all position control monitoring for both teams, once an improved automated system is installed.
(c)The PMF clerks would be permanent; three others would be hired temporarily during the summer.

EXHIBIT III-4

The Scope of The Department Of Personnel Services Should Encompass Staff Development, EAP, And Retirement Counseling Functions

A Division of Staff Development and Counseling should be established parallel to the two existing Divisions in the Department of Personnel Services. The Division should be headed by a director who reports to the Director - Personnel Services.

The current Department of Staff Development and the Special and Alternative Education In-Service Training Unit should be transferred to the Department of Personnel Services. A new counseling section should be created, encompassing EAP and retirement counseling functions. The manager of this section should report to the Director of the Division of Staff Development and Counseling. The Division will encompass the range of functions currently assumed by the Division of Staff Development, the Special and Alternative Education In-Service Training Unit, the EAP, and retirement counseling. (As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Division of Administrative Analysis and Audits is undertaking a study of staff development. The recommendations offered in this report pertaining to staff development functions should be taken into consideration in that study, and final decisions about the organizational location of staff development units should be made upon completion of the staff development study. Decisions to move the EAP and retirement counseling into the Department of Personnel Services should be made as soon as possible, however.)

The transfer of the staff development function to personnel will bring in close organizational proximity positions with responsibility for closely related activities and will enable the Department of Personnel Services to more effectively accomplish its primary objective now and in the future. The increased emphasis on manpower planning and on transfers of personnel has a training and counseling component; the need for strong personnel management at the school and administrative unit level requires coordination with the design of A&S training programs. Although the move of staff development will provide greater distance from instruction, this disadvantage is outweighed by the opportunity for increased emphasis on support services training.

The transfer of the EAP and retirement counseling functions should support the growing need for counseling and retraining of employees who are facing fewer opportunities for advancement, staying in the school system (and often in the same positions) longer, and encountering unfamiliar and sometimes demoralizing new experiences such as school closings and involuntary transfers, and should reduce the current fragmentation of various employee and training counseling services.

Procedures should be adopted to ensure the continued confidentiality of EAP records and separation of those records from personnel files. The EAP offices should remain physically separate from other offices to provide the required privacy and reassurance to client employees that their discussions with EAP officials are confidential.

The other sections of the Division of Insurance and Retirement should remain in the Department of Financial Services, where close coordination with other financial functions will be facilitated.

The Department Of Personnel Services' Supervisory Structure Should Be Streamlined By Eliminating The Position Of Assistant Director

Currently, the Department of Personnel Services has both a Director and an Assistant Director. The Director oversees the work of the Department, but most day-to-day operation is delegated to the two Division Directors. The Director also advises the Superintendent on personnel matters, investigates sensitive incidents, and oversees the A&S personnel selection process. The Assistant Director primarily serves as an extension of the Director and acts for the Director in fulfilling these responsibilities.

The Department's Assistant Director position should be eliminated in order to remove an unnecessary level of supervision and reduce the cost of operating the Department. The two Division Directors should report directly to the Director and perform the Department's day-to-day management. One or the other Division Director should serve as Acting Director in the Director's absence. The Assistant Directors' A&S responsibilities should be reassigned to staff in the Office of the Director, particularly the Personnel Assistant. The Director - Personnel Services or the Director - Salary Administration, Certification, and Records should assume responsibility for leave administration and Level One supporting services grievances. Special committee chairmanships should be split between the two Division Directors as appropriate.

The justification of such a reduction is based on both supervisory structure and workload considerations. Regarding supervision, almost all functions of the Department of Personnel Services are and should be delegated to the two Divisions and administered by the Division Directors. This type of delegation provides an effective management structure and appears to work effectively in practice. The specific responsibilities of the Director require the authority and expertise of his office. Thus, it is difficult for the Assistant Director to be given distinct authority, and, in fact, the Assistant Director's responsibilities are primarily acting for the Director.

Workload considerations, however, do not warrant two director positions. The span of control is modest. The number of A&S opportunities has decreased over the past five years. The investigation of serious incidents is a continuing activity despite the reduction in number of employees, but other staff at less than the Department Assistant Director level can be used for this purpose, and it is not clear that an additional position is required to provide this support.

This action will reduce salary and fringe benefit costs by approximately $61,500 annually. Other recommended staffing adjustments are discussed in the following chapters.

Responsibility For Screening Candidates For EYE Positions Should Remain In The Department Of Adult Education, But The Department Of Personnel Services Should Review And Approve Hiring Recommendations

Placement of the responsibility for screening applicants for extended-year employment (EYE) in the Department of Adult Education is appropriate because that Department is responsible for the two programs that make the greatest use of EYE days (adult education and summer school). Moreover, the EYE Specialist spends only part of the year on this function and performs other duties required by the Department of Adult Education during the remainder of the year.

The absence of a check on these screening and selection activities is problemmatic, however. While there is no evidence of current abuses, the provision of reviews by separate organizational units is desirable in all personnel hiring activities in order to reduce the possibility that hiring and placement decisions will be made without full adherence to personnel policies and procedures. Therefore, the Department of Personnel Services should be assigned official responsibility for ensuring that the procedures and criteria used in obtaining and screening EYE applications are sound and fair and that responsibility for reviewing, approving, and processing all EYE recommendations submitted by the Department of Adult Education. The Division of Staffing should be given additional temporary assistance during an appropriate portion of the spring and early summer for this purpose, and the Director - Staffing should approve all EYE hires.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Department Should Be Assigned Responsibility For Comprehensive Manpower Planning For MCPS

The Department should provide the staff planning to anticipate and prepare for emerging needs, issues, and problems requiring new or modified personnel resources, policies, and procedures. This

planning should use enrollment estimates and information on current staff characteristics to project the likely staff requirements for each of the next five years in administrative, professional, and support areas. These manpower requirements should be updated each year, and current experience should be compared with earlier projections as a way of refining the manpower planning process. The projections should be used to establish recruiting and staff development goals for the next year and should be reflected in adjustments in the level and deployment of Department of Personnel Services staff. The plans should be coordinated with other planning units, such as those responsible for budget and capital improvement planning. Such planning will provide the school system with more accurate projections of staffing requirements. By the end of 1983, the Department should develop an approach to such planning, including the process of making annual updates, and should produce the first version of the plan. Documentation of the planning procedures should clearly identify planning objectives, types of projections to be made, types of reports to be produced, required data, data collection responsibilities, data processing support requirements, and ways in which the resulting plan will be used by the school system.

The responsibility for staffing this planning function should rest with the Office of the Director, Department of Personnel Services. Several alternative approaches exist to establishing this planning capability. One approach would be to appoint an Administrative Assistant to the Director to provide this assistance and to support the Director in a broader range of activities, thereby absorbing some of the loss of support created by abolishing the Assistant Director position. Such an approach would also permit broader focus by the Department on planning and management information as outlined in the recommendations that follow. A second approach would be to use Department of Educational Accountability personnel on special assignments to provide the planning support. Finally, in any consideration of broader MCPS reorganization, a more comprehensive planning capability should be considered, integrating planning for human resources, materials, equipment, and facilities within the broad context of school system objectives and community or other environmental changes.

The Department Should Establish Measurable Long-Range And Annual Objectives

The Department should support the manpower projections, clarify expectations for achievements and progress, and strengthen its own direction and management by establishing more specific long-range and annual objectives. These objectives should indicate clearly what is to be accomplished and why, measurable indexes of performance to be applied, and specific deadlines for key milestones and completion of assigned tasks. Supporting explanation for the objectives should articulate a rationale for focusing on these objectives (including any available relevant

data), relationships between the Department's manpower planning and the chosen objectives, and existing or anticipated problems or needs to be addressed. Monthly and annual management reports should be submitted by the Division Directors to the Director and by Team Leaders and Specialists to the Division Directors summarizing progress in achieving stated objectives, including data corresponding with specified performance indicators.

This Departmental planning should assist in focusing Departmental staff activities on the specific annual and long-range target objectives and on linking these activities and objectives to the manpower requirements of MCPS. This is particularly important where the requirements are changing and long-term staff become accustomed to conducting Departmental business in a certain way. It forces the reexamination and testing of current practices, measuring them against new or reaffirmed objectives. This then enables the staff of the Department of Personnel Services to be more assertive in presenting changes in policies and procedures to line managers. This planning also provides information to direct and assess Department of Personnel Services performance.

The Department Of Personnel Services Should Assume A Stronger Role In Monitoring The Implementation Of Performance Evaluations And Other Personnel Practices By Line Managers

Currently, although there are clear policies and procedures to guide line managers in fulfilling their personnel management responsibilities, the Department of Personnel Services has not been assigned a sufficiently strong role in monitoring the degree to which these policies and procedures are actually followed. Rather, its emphasis has been on giving assistance where desired. To the degree that implementation of personnel policies and procedures are not always followed, there are significant mangement and equity implications. The correction of such management problems rests with the Superintendent and his line managers. A commitment to enhancement must be given a high priority at this level, and the Department of Personnel Services should not be cast in an enforcement role. The Department should monitor the degree to which policies are implemented by line managers, however, and this information should be required and used by the Superintendent and his top staff in enforcing comprehensive and consistent personnel management.

The Superintendent should insist, and the Department should ensure, that the forms for recruitment, transfers, performance evaluations, and leave are appropriately completed and submitted in a timely manner. The quality of the work submitted should be monitored and used with line managers in establishing their performance objectives and evaluating their performance. For example, a school principal should be expected to submit teacher evaluation information that demonstrates effective supervision and

assessment. The Superintendent and Area Associate Superintendents should use information obtained from a review of evaluation data to increase the effectiveness of principals' evaluation procedures.

To implement this recommendation, the Superintendent should request the Director - Personnel Services to submit periodic reports monitoring the implementation of key personnel policies. The Director should designate specific positions with responsibility for preparing these reports. Information from these reports should also be used by the Department of Staff Development in designating training needs. Manpower for this work can be acomplished through the use of existing personnel during the less active periods of the year. If an Administrative Assistant to the Director is appointed, his work could include planning the monitoring activities which should then be delegated to the Division Directors.

Communications With Principals And Other Users Should Be Improved, Responsibilities Should Be Clarified, And Issues Should Be Resolved

The recent report by a committee of the Secondary Schools Administrators' Association and similar reports submitted by other groups in recent years demonstrate the need to improve communications between the Department of Personnel Services and the persons it serves. Issues and disagreements must be more clearly articulated and quickly resolved. Policies, procedures, and responsibilities must be clearly agreed upon and documented, as recommended elsewhere in this report. Communications within the Department of Personnel Services and between the Department and each of the groups it serves must be made more consistent.

To achieve these ends, it is recommended that the existing principals' Liaison Committee be expanded to represent all user groups and that the committee meet on a regular basis. The Director - Personnel Services should chair the committee and should be responsible for setting each meeting's agenda (based on suggestions from all committee members) and for ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to follow up on decisions reached in the committee's meetings. The committee should include the Department's Division Directors as required. Other members should include principals (elementary, intermediate, and secondary) and supervisors from area and central administrative offices. The committee should be small to facilitate discussion. The committee's decisions, recommendations, and actions should be documented in minutes and other appropriate written communications, such as brief, clear explanations of agreed-upon procedures.

The expanded committee's first responsibility should be to review this MORE study of personnel services. The concerns and issues cited in the report of the Secondary School Administrators'

Association and other documents should be discussed to determine whether they will be adequately resolved through implementation of this report's recommendations or will require additional actions.

Installation Of An Improved Automated Human Resources System And Expanded Word Processing Support Should Be Expedited

Conduct of many of the Department's functions (such as maintenance and use of accurate, up-to-date information on employees) and improvements in many key areas (such as accessing applications, monitoring position control, maintaining and frequently updating lists, and preparing correspondence) require satisfactory data processing and word processing support. Development of the new human resources system should be continued and expedited to the fullest degree possible, and additional word processors should be installed and put into active use as soon as possible. Department of Personnel Services managers should be consulted more regularly as a group in planning the new system, to ensure a cohesive, consistent overall design and the achievement of agreement on needs and priorities. Conversion of the Personnel Master File (PMF) and position control modules to data base, including needed improvements in these functions, should proceed at an accelerated pace. Consideration should be given to simultaneously designing and implementing a simple system of basic information on applicants, perhaps using word processors, to improve the efficiency of screening and selection activities and to provide easy access to the information and opportunity to modify the data efficiently. In addition, analyses should be performed of the costs and benefits of keeping the application information system simple and separate from other components of the human resources system (such as the PMF); it is likely to be more efficient to enter a few basic items of information on all applicants, some of which would be reentered in the human resources system for the relatively few who are hired, than to initially enter all information on all applicants, most of whom are not hired, and for whom only a temporary record is needed.

While the PMF, position control, and applicant information components are being developed, initial design work on other high-priority components - including an employee skills bank, performance evaluation records, and applicant testing - should proceed. Detailed development of these second-phase components should proceed in such a way as to avoid a long delay in their delivery after implementation of the highest-priority components.

In anticipation of expanded word processing support, the Department should continue planning the functions to be performed on word processors that are now done manually or on typewriters and should continue training its secretaries. Complete implementation of the word processors should allow the elimination of one secretarial position in the Division of Staffing, thereby reducing the school system's annual salary and benefits expenditures by approximately $20,500. The additional responsibilities in entering

application information can be handled through reassignments among the remaining secretaries, whose workloads will be substantially reduced through the use of word processing. This planning may be accomplished in conjunction with the manpower planning presented in a prior recommendation.

A critical requirement of the successful implementation of increased uses of automation in the Department will be sufficient staff training. The design of such training should proceed as the new systems are developed in order to enable the timely completion of required training and to avoid delays in implementation. No unusual problems are anticipated in preparing the Department's staff to make greater use of automation, particularly in view of the increasing "user-friendliness" of computer software, the Department's experience in using some automation in the past, and the availability in the Department of several knowledgeable and skilled individuals who can assist in the training of others.

The Department Of Personnel Services' Physical Facilities Should Be Improved

To remedy problems with an inadequate reception area, lack of sound-proofing in offices, inadequate ventilation in some areas (requiring the application file room door to be left open, for example), and improper use of the Department's facilities as a hallway, MCPS should analyze alternative facility arrangements. While the deficiencies are not sufficiently important to justify large expenditures of funds, they do warrant study of alternatives.

If possible, a reception area should be provided to the Department that would be quiet and not receive an excess level of traffic. Sufficient room should be provided to applicants to wait and to fill out applications. The reception area should be situated to prevent applicants and other outsiders from observing work or overhearing confidential conversations. Individual offices of interviewers and counselors should be sufficiently sound-proofed so that their conversations cannot be overheard and so that interviewees are not distracted by noise outside the offices. Ventilation of the application file room should be improved, allowing closure of the door between the file room and the reception area, thereby providing greater security for the files. The carpet should be repaired or replaced to avoid injury and lawsuits. Finally, the Department's area should be structured to avoid unnecessary through traffic to protect the security of sensitive personnel information.

The Department Of Personnel Services Should Monitor Sick Leave

Because of the current high comparative use of sick leave in MCPS, the Department should immediately begin an investigation of sick leave. The Department should monitor trends in use of sick leave over time and in comparison to other school districts and among departments. If it appears that excessive leave is being taken, the Department should investigate the causes and take appropriate action to address any violation of MCPS policies.

If a new Administrative Assistant is hired in the Office of the Director - Personnel Services (as recommended elsewhere in this report, to assume some of the responsibilities now carried out by the Department's Assistant Director), the Administrative Assistant should be assigned responsibility for designing and implementing procedures to monitor leave and for continuing the actual monitoring. If a new Administrative Assistant is not hired, this responsibility should be assumed by the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. Responsibility for reviewing and either approving or disapproving employees' specific leave requests should remain with the employees' supervisors, but the Superintendent should emphasize the importance of observing school system leave guidelines and of restricting leave to that which is clearly warranted. Moreover, problems in supervisors' leave approval activities identified through theDepartment of Personnel Services' monitoring activities should be communicated to the Superintendent, who should ensure that such problems are attended to.

A management leave information reporting system should be developed as part of the new payroll and leave accounting system. This system would report average sick leave earned and taken by major organizational groups, such as school, division, area, and department. This information would allow MCPS management to compare leave use across organizational units, an aid to identifying possible leave abuse.

MCPS Should Study Alternatives To Its Leave Advancement Policy

The costs of the current leave advancement policy are unknown, but estimates suggest the need for such a study. The study should focus on the specific types of leave that cause financial losses, the circumstances surrounding these losses, and any patterns that appear in the losses. The possible increase in difficulty in recovering advanced leave because of changes in the retirement system should also be addressed. Determination should be made of the steps that can and should be taken to reduce or eliminate MCPS losses emanating from the policy and present its recommendations

to MCPS administration. Taking these steps will help MCPS officials understand whether or not advancement of leave is a significant problem and whether reasonable steps can be taken to reduce the financial drain of the policy.

Procedures For Reviewing Disability Leave And Workers' Compensation Claims Should Be Analyzed

Actual problems in the current system of dual review should be determined through focused collection and analysis of relevant information. The Department of Financial Services should provide to the Department of Educational Accountability complete information on the disposition of all claims made during the past five years. This information should include for each of the five years the number of claims submitted annually; the number of approved and disapproved disability leaves; the number of cases in which workers' compensation was approved and the number of cases in which it was denied; the total amount of reimbursed salary due to the school system; the actual amount reimbursed; and the amount owed but not reimbursed.

Upon receipt of this information, the Division of Administrative Analysis and Audits should determine the extent of problems being created by the current arrangement. If the problems are substantial (that is, if individual employees are being regularly placed in difficult financial positions as a result of reversals or if the school system is losing more than $25,000 annually as a result of unreimbursed salaries), MCPS should appoint the committee recommended in the MORE Report on the Payroll System. The committee's charge should be to design a revised system of expeditious, unified, fair review that eliminates problems resulting from approved leave and disapproved compensation.

MCPS's Compensatory Leave Policy Should Be Enforced Or Changed

Elimination of the current discrepancy between MCPS's compensatory leave policy and actual practice can be achieved only by enforcing the policy or by modifying its terms. The preferred alternative is enforcement. Managers and supervisors should be reminded of the policy and of their responsibilities in ensuring that employees use leave for days not worked. Prospective new professional employees (including higher-level supporting services employees who are not eligible for overtime) should be informed, and existing professional employees should be reminded, that professional positions are not compensated on an hourly, 40-hour per-week basis and that professional responsibilities in a school system often require more than 40 hours of work. Implementation of this recommendation will eliminate inequitable treatment of employees across organizational units created by inconsistent enforcement of the compensatory leave policy; it will also eliminate the existing discrepancy between policy and practice.

If the Board of Education and the Superintendent determine that strict enforcement of the existing policy is unworkable, the policy should be modified slightly to allow very limited amounts of compensatory leave under clearly specified circumstances, such as when an employee must work most or all of the night and would be unproductive some of the following day. Such instances should be minimized through careful planning and management, however. Further, such a policy should not be construed as limiting professional employees to a 40-hour week.

Early Retirement Option Should Be Carefully Evaluated As A Means Of Reducing Staff Costs

Some senior MCPS administrators have been discussing the possibility of providing employees with the option to retire with a minimum 25 years service, rather than 30 years, as a means of reducing staff costs. MCPS officials believe that voluntary retirement of senior (generally higher-paid) employees will provide higher savings than a reduction in force, which generally affects less senior (and generally lower-salaried) employees.

Several factors must be taken into consideration, however. Any possible reduction in staff payroll costs must be weighed against the additional actuarial costs of employee pensions that accrue as a result of early retirement. Although an early retirement penalty of 6 per cent per year (30 per cent at 25 years) exists to minimize any additional pension costs, employee groups are attempting to negotiate a salary incentive (or retirement bonus) to offset this retirement penalty. Further, most MCPS employees are covered under the Maryland State Retirement System (MSRS), which provides for full cost-of-living adjustments tied to 100 per cent of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In a period of high inflation, early retirement under the MSRS would appear to be a costly alternative, even with the specified penalty.

IV - DIVISION OF STAFFING

This chapter presents background information, observations about strengths and opportunities for improvement, and recommendations pertaining to the Division of Staffing's responsibilities, organization and staffing, management and administration, and management processes.

A - BACKGROUND

This section reviews the functions, organization, and staffing of the Division of Staffing and describes the steps involved in recruiting, screening, interviewing, selecting, processing, and placement of employees and the handling of substitutes.

ORGANIZATION, STAFFING, AND BUDGET

The Division of Staffing is responsible for all activities pertaining to recruitment, employment, assignment, reductions in force, and administration of the leave program. The Division's functions include:

- Filling positions with qualified persons
- Monitoring position control
- Counseling employees
- Conducting investigations
- Administering the substitute teacher program
- Conducting orientation sessions for new employees
- Assisting in the adjudication of grievances and administrative complaints
- Maintaining employment application files

- Maintaining lists of vacancies, persons being involuntarily transferred, persons desiring voluntary transfers, and persons returning from leave

- Supporting the administration of the extended year employment (EYE) program

- Assisting in the development and interpretation of relevant policies and procedures

- Standardizing and refining processes

- Advising the Director - Personnel Services

- Preparing required and requested reports, correspondence, and annual budget requests.

In fiscal 1983, the Division of Staffing has a budget of $713,235 and a staff of 24 full-time employees. Of the total budget, $697,135 (97.7 per cent) supports salaries and wages, including $660,139 for salaries of the 24 full-time employees, $16,153 for extended year employment of two Teacher Placement Assistants (who are 10-month employees), $14,719 for part-time clerical assistance, and $6,124 for clerical overtime. The only budget items beyond salaries and wages are advertising ($6,900) and staff travel and fees for teacher recruitment activities ($9,500).

The Division's staff has been reduced 20 per cent, from 30 to 25 persons, since fiscal 1978, as shown in Exhibit III-2. This trend parallels the general reduction of work to be accomplished in the Division's major areas of responsibility. The number of new persons hired for teaching and supporting services positions dropped 60 per cent (from 1,497 to 599) between fiscal 1977 and fiscal 1982, as shown in Exhibit IV-1. During the four-year period between fiscal 1978 and fiscal 1982, the number of applications for teaching positions fell 48 per cent (from 3,433 to 1,793). In addition, the need to interview large numbers of applicants has declined as the number of openings has decreased. On the other hand, the number of school employees (professional and supporting services) to be reassigned has been increasing significantly in recent years with the rise in school closings; the 1,108 persons involuntarily transferred in 1982 represents a 29 per cent increase over the 862 persons transferred in 1981 and a 112 per cent increase over the 523 persons transferred in 1980. Increases in transfers have required additional activity within the Division, including meetings with staffs of schools being closed, meetings with individual staff members, maintaining lists of persons requiring reassignment, providing information to principals, and processing transfer papers.

Since June 1982, the Division has been organized into three units: the Director's Office and two staffing teams. Prior to the June reorganization, the Division had three staffing teams.

The Office of the Director consists of a Director, a Secretary to the Director, and three Office Assistants. The Director plans, coordinates, and manages the Division's activities, confers with and advises the Director - Personnel Services and other MCPS officials as appropriate, and reviews all staffing recommendations except those for A&S positions. The Secretary to the Director schedules interviews, types correspondence and reports, and provides other needed assistance to the Director. One Office Assistant prepares teachers' contracts; arranges and conducts orientation and contract signing sessions; tracks and processes forms and information submitted by new employees; and maintains teacher hiring, transfer, and substitute statistics. A second Office Assistant serves as Receptionist, schedules orientation sessions for supporting services employees, and assists in the file room. The third Office Assistant maintains the applicant files and sorts and distributes the Division's mail.

In the past, MCPS staff responsible for staffing functions have specialized by type of position. This arrangement was most pronounced before the 1978 reorganization, when separate departments existed for supporting services and professional positions. The recent trend has been toward making all staff members generalists. The two teams provide support for filling all positions, thereby giving each staff member broadened responsibility. This procedure affords one point of contact for each principal and enables the Division to attract and retain better qualified staff. Staff members still specialize in screening applicants for particular types of positions, however, and supervisors still tend to contact the person they believe knows the needs of particular positions best.

Team 1 serves the Area 1 Administrative Office and all Area 1 schools, the Area 2 Administrative Office and all Area 2 schools, and the Office of Supportive Services and administers the substitute teacher program. Team 2 serves the Area 3 Administrative Office and all Area 3 schools, all special schools, the Office of Special and Alternative Education, the Office of the Superintendent, and the Office of Instruction and Program Development and administers the hiring of bus operators. Each of the two teams consists of a Staffing Specialist/Team Leader, an Employment Specialist, two Staffing Assistants, a Teacher Placement Assistant, a Personnel Assistant, and three Secretaries. Additionally, Team 1 includes an Office Assistant who compiles and distributes lists of substitute teachers.

The two Staffing Specialists coordinate the work of their teams; participate in their teams' interviewing, selection, promotion, and assignment activities; coordinate and conduct investigations; review evaluations and adverse actions; and participate in hearings. The Employment Specialist on Team 1 maintains an eligibility file for supporting services personnel, interviews applicants, conducts investigations, serves as a resource in grievances, and participates in all of the team's activities relating to the hiring of teachers. The Employment Specialist on Team 2 coordinates the Division's administration of the leave programs, prepares planning reports on projected vacancies for the coming year, and participates in all of the team's hiring activities. The four Staffing Assistants screen applications, interview applicants, assist in selection and assignment processes, participate in the investigation of complaints and hearings, and counsel employees. The two 10-month Teacher Placement Assistants are teachers on two-year assignments to the Department who participate in all of their teams' activities pertaining to teacher recruitment, interviewing, selection, assignment, promotion, investigations, hearings, and counseling. The two Personnel Assistants process employment and transfer actions and monitor position control. The teams' six Secretaries communicate with applicants and employees about the status of their applications and inquiries, type correspondence, reports, and other documents, handle telephone calls, help process employment and promotional actions, and arrange interviews.

RECRUITMENT

MCPS's recruitment activities include visits to colleges and universities to interview candidates for teaching positions; attendance at several regional recruitment consortiums and national conferences; conduct of several career day events; maintenance and distribution of lists of openings; announcements in the "MCPS Bulletin"; advertisements in local newspapers and professional journals; and phone calls to persons likely to know of qualified candidates. During the 1981-82 school year, Division of Staffing staff visited 70 colleges and universities in nine states (82 per cent of which were in the District of Columbia, Delaware, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, or New Jersey); organized four college career days; attended four recruitment consortiums; and attended three national conferences (the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the Council on Exceptional Children). Fourteen per cent of the colleges and universities visited were predominantly black institutions; the purposes of these visits and the visits to two of the three conferences were primarily to recruit minority candidates.

In selecting institutions to visit and in scheduling interviews, the Division has been attempting to minimize its efforts in areas in which few new employees are likely to be hired due to low turnover and large intrasystem transfers (such as elementary education) and to concentrate on areas in which highly qualified candidates are needed and difficult to attract (such as science, mathematics, and special education).

Twice each year (in October and April) the school system announces in the "MCPS Bulletin" that it is accepting applications for supporting services positions, as explained in more detail in the following section. Positions for which qualified candidates are scarce and/or which require specific expertise (such as data processing or accounting) are advertised in newspapers and journals. All higher-level supporting services positions (grade 14 and above), which are considered promotional positions, are advertised, at least internally, on an individual basis as they become vacant.

PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

All applications for teaching and supporting services positions are maintained in a file room near the Department's reception area. As each application arrives, the Office Assistant in charge of the file room prepares a card for the alphabetical index, attaches a check-off sheet to the applicant's folder (on which to record which required materials have and have not been received), and files the folder in the appropriate section. The Office Assistant places references, test results, transcripts, and credentials in the folder as they arrive. When all required materials have been received, the Office Assistant routes the folder and a review sheet to the suitable Division staff member.

Each professional on the two teams is assigned responsibility for screening applications for specific types of positions. The staff member reviews the application file, decides whether or not to invite the applicant for an interview, and designates which form letter to send. If an interview is not conducted, the folder is returned to the file with a review sheet indicating the results of the screening. If the applicant is invited to an interview, he or she arrives early to take the required test(s) if not already taken. The Division staff member conducts the interview using a structured guide, prepares a standard evaluation sheet (indicating, among other things, whether or not the applicant is recommended for hiring), and returns the folder to the file.

All application files are then available for inspection by Division staff, principals, and supervisors when candidates are being sought to fill vacancies. Near the end of each fiscal year, Division staff review the files and ask selected applicants if they wish to reactivate their files for the following year; all applications received in the preceding year and not reactivated are moved to a vault; and all five-year-old applications are destroyed.

In fiscal 1982, MCPS received 1,793 applications for teaching positions, a 14 per cent reduction from the 2,085 received in the preceding year and a 48 per cent reduction from the 3,433 received four years earlier (in 1977-78).

SCREENING, INTERVIEWING, AND SELECTION

Teaching Positions

Applicants for teaching positions are screened by Division staff members' reviews of application files and interviews, as just described. When a vacancy occurs, the principal or a Division staff member searches the files for appropriate, qualified candidates. On the basis of information in the files, the principal decides which candidate(s) to interview, completes an evaluation (Form 430-67) of the recommended candidate, and submits a recommendation to the Division of Staffing.

Recommendations and evaluations are sometimes communicated over the telephone, with Division of Staffing staff members completing the necessary forms with information supplied by the principals. The Staffing Specialist for the team to which the principal's school is assigned reviews the recommendation; the team's Personnel Assistant reviews his or her position control documents to ensure that a vacancy exists; and the Director - Staffing and the Director - Personnel Services review and approve the recommendation.

As shown in Exhibit IV-1 on the following page, in fiscal 1982 MCPS hired 183 new teachers. This number of teachers was 248 fewer than the 431 teachers hired in the preceding year (a 58 per cent decrease) and 430 fewer than the 613 teachers hired five years earlier (a 70 per cent decrease).

Montgomery County Public Schools
Department Of Personnel Services

NUMBER OF PERSONS HIRED FOR PERMANENT POSITIONS(a)

Type Of Position	Fiscal Year						Five-Year Comparision	
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	Number Of Persons	Per Cent
Administrative And Supervisory	77	103	111	115	73	51	- 26	-33.8%
Teaching	613	303	699	452	431	183	-430	-70.1%
Supporting Services	884	494	1,136	746	738	416	-468	-52.9%
Total	1,574	900	1,946	1,313	1,242	650	-924	-58.7%

(a)Includes all full-time and part-time permanent positions.

EXHIBIT IV-1

Supporting Services Positions

Lower-level (below Grade 14) supporting services positions are filled from eligibility lists, which are intended to improve the efficiency of the selection process by avoiding the conduct of a separate competition to fill each vacancy. Applicants can be placed on the eligibility lists in three ways. Twice each year (in October and April) MCPS runs blanket advertisements by classification. In response to these ads, MCPS employees interested in promotions and interested outside persons submit applications. Outside applicants are encouraged to take the appropriate tests. Division of Staffing staff conduct structured interviews for selected positions. All applicants are rated according to established criteria, thereby yielding a standardized total score for each applicant. Scores and other information are entered into the Department's System 6 word processor, which produces rank-ordered eligibility lists. All applicants are informed of their status by letter.

Applicants for lower-level supporting services positions can also be placed on the eligibility lists by submitting unsolicited applications or by applying for specific advertised positions. When an interested person has submitted an unsolicited application and required references, a Division staff member reviews the file to determine eligibility. If the applicant is deemed ineligible, he or she receives a letter so stating.

If the applicant is eligible, he or she is invited to take the aptitute test (and a skills test for selected positions) and is interviewed by a Division staff member. After completing a standard evaluation form, the staff member either sends the applicant a letter indicating ineligibility or places the applicant on the eligibility list for the appropriate position(s) and sends the application to the "complete" section of the supporting services file room.

Lower-level supporting services positions are advertised if the suitable eligibility list contains fewer than four candidates when a vacancy occurs. A Division staff member reviews all submitted applications, invites applicants to take appropriate tests, sends letters to those deemed ineligible at this point, interviews eligible applicants, and completes standard evaluation forms. The hiring supervisor then reviews the application materials and Division staff member's analysis, interviews all eligible applicants, and makes a recommendation. Unselected eligible applicants are placed on an eligibility list.

All promotional supporting services positions (Grade 14 and above) are filled through individual competitions. When a position becomes vacant, the Department of Personnel Services advertises it, either in the "MCPS Bulletin" only or in both the "Bulletin" and local newspapers, depending on the Department's judgment of the availability of qualified candidates. At the time of the advertisement, a Division of Staffing staff member reviews applications on file for appropriate candidates and asks such persons if they would be interested in the position being advertised. The Division staff member screens applications using criteria listed in the job description. A hiring panel (recommended by the hiring supervisor and reviewed by the Division staff member) drafts interview questions, which are reviewed by the Division staff member for suitability. The panel interviews all candidates who have cleared the screening, and each panel member prepares an evaluation sheet for each candidate. The Division staff member scores the interview results and prepares an analysis of all candidates on all factors under consideration. The hiring supervisor reviews the analysis and submits a recommendation and rationale, indicating particular reasons for not selecting the top-ranked candidate if that person is not being recommended. The recommendation is reviewed by the appropriate Team Leader and by the Director - Staffing. If the recommendation is approved, the Director offers the position to the selected applicant and sends letters to applicants who were not selected.

As shown in Exhibit IV-1, a total of 416 persons were hired for permanent supporting services positions (both full time and part time) in fiscal 1982. This level of hiring activity represented a 44 per cent decrease from the 738 persons hired in the preceding year and a 53 per cent decrease from the 884 persons hired five years earlier.

Part-Time And Temporary Positions

The procedures used for filling part-time teaching and supporting services positions are the same as those just described for full-time positions. The procedures used for obtaining temporary assistance are different, however. Persons being considered for temporary positions must submit applications and other standard required documents and information, which are kept on file in the Department of Personnel Services, but the screening and interviewing procedures used for full-time and part-time positions are not required for temporary positions. In most cases, hiring supervisors with funds for temporary assistance in their budgets indicate to the Division of Staffing whom they wish to hire on a temporary basis, and the Division processes the required papers in the usual way. MCPS hired 4,932 temporary employees in fiscal 1982.

Summer Employment Program

The summer employment program - which is run by a Team 1 Secretary who serves as Summer Employment Coordinator between May and August - is more structured. In April an advertisement is placed in the "MCPS Bulletin" announcing that the school system is willing to receive applications for summer employment. The Summer Employment Coordinator acknowledges all applications with a form letter, prepares alphabetical locator cards, and files applications by priority.

Ten-month MCPS employees receive first priority; previous summer employees are second priority; and new applicants are third priority. Hiring supervisors either look through the files for appropriate applicants or ask the Summer Employment Coordinator to refer appropriate applicants. Persons who are hired complete the required forms. All persons not placed by late July receive letters. In 1982, 942 summer employment applications were received and 604 persons were hired.

PROCESSING OF NEW HIRES

When new teachers are hired, the Office Assistant responsible for contracts receives the application files, checks to ensure that required forms and information are available, prepares contracts, and schedules group contract signing and orientation sessions (which are attended by 15 to 30 new teachers). During the orientation sessions, the new teachers listen to presentations on human relations, certification, benefit programs, and leaves; sign their contracts; and fill out forms pertaining to certification, benefits, and the teachers' organization. After the sessions a letter is sent to each new teacher indicating which required forms and documents, if any, have not been received by the Division of Staffing. In addition to certification and benefits forms, these include a proof of birth certificate, a withholding certificate, official transcripts (applicants usually submit copies at the time of application), and verification of employment forms. The letter indicates that if all forms are not received within 30 days, the employee will be placed on leave without pay. Near the end of the 30-day period the Office Assistant checks to determine whether all forms and the certification payment have been submitted. If they have, the papers are forwarded to the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records for processing, as described in Chapter V.

The processing of new supporting services employees is similar to the processing of new teachers, except that orientation sessions are held each week and certification is not involved.

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

The placement of school employees is an increasingly complicated and important process. Large numbers of schools are being closed annually due to declining enrollments and employees who had worked in the closed schools have to be reassigned. At the end of the 1981-82 school year, for example, 19 schools were closed and 1,064 MCPS employees had to be reassigned as a result of these closings and budget reductions in other areas.

Exhibit IV-2, on the following page, summarizes the school employee placement process. Persons requiring placement include those who have been approved for voluntary transfer, those being involuntarily transferred due to closed schools or the elimination of positions (as a result of budget reductions), and employees returning from leave. Applications for voluntary transfers must be submitted to the Department of Personnel Services by the first Monday in March and are reviewed by the Division of Staffing. Transfer requests are disapproved for persons who do not have tenure, who are requesting transfers out of their fields of preparation and certification, or who are listed on a mid-year report (as having received an unsatisfactory performance evaluation). The Department distributes a list of persons approved for voluntary transfer to the area offices in April. A total of 757 teachers applied for voluntary transfers in the spring of 1982; of these, 626 (82.7 per cent) were approved for consideration and 73 (9.6 per cent) were actually transferred.

Persons to be involuntarily transferred include those from closed schools and those whose positions are eliminated by principals who receive reduced allocations following final approval of the school system budget. The Board of Education tries to make school closing decisions during the fall of the year preceding the closings. Shortly after such decisions are made, Department and area office representatives meet with each school's staff to discuss the placement procedures. Each affected staff member prepares a "Preference for Reassignment" form. Division of Staffing staff meet with individual employees who wish such counsel and prepare lists of all persons requiring transfer. These lists, which are updated weekly, are distributed to the Area Associate Superintendents, who are responsible for ensuring placement of affected employees in their areas and for informing principals in their areas of persons requiring placement. As of September 1982, MCPS had involuntarily transferred 1,108 school employees, including 689 teachers and 253 supporting services employees. This is 29 per cent higher than the 862 employees involuntarily transferred in the preceding year and 112 per cent higher than the number of employees involuntarily transferred in 1980 (523).

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

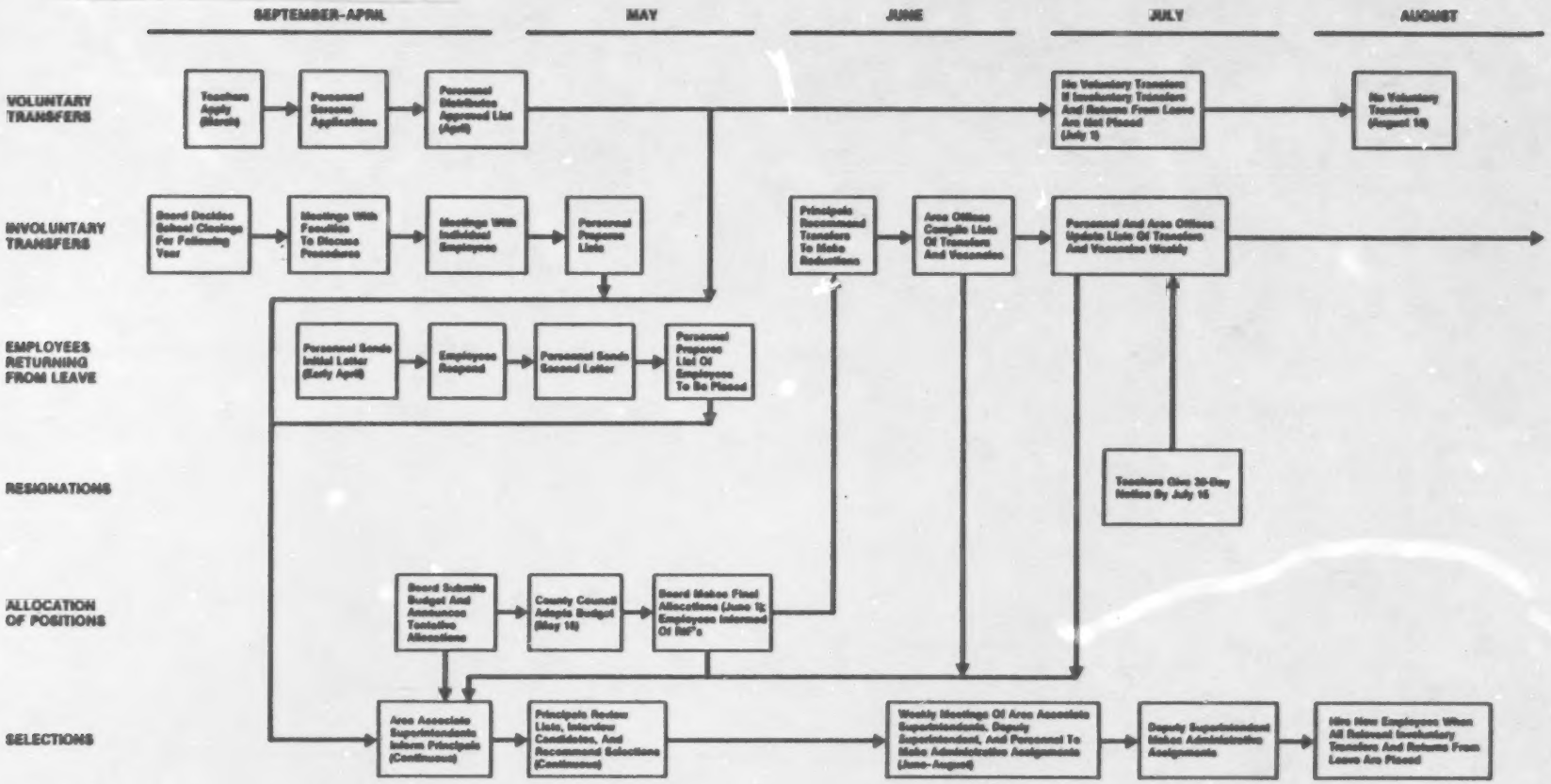

SEPTEMBER-APRIL
MAY
JUNE
JULY
AUGUST
VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS
Teachers Apply (March)
Personnel Screens Applications
Personnel Distributes Approved List (April)
No Voluntary Transfers If Involuntary Transfers And Returns From Leave Are Not Placed (July 1)
No Voluntary Transfers (August 15)
INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS
Board Decides School Closings For Following Year
Meetings With Faculties To Discuss Procedures
Meetings With Individual Employees
Personnel Prepares Lists
Principals Recommend Transfers To Make Reductions
Area Offices Compile Lists Of Transfers And Vacancies
Personnel And Area Offices Update Lists Of Transfers And Vacancies Weekly
EMPLOYEES RETURNING FROM LEAVE
Personnel Sends Initial Letter (Early April)
Employees Respond
Personnel Sends Second Letter
Personnel Prepares List Of Employees To Be Placed
RESIGNATIONS
Teachers Give 30-Day Notice By July 15
ALLOCATION OF POSITIONS
Board Submits Budget And Announces Tentative Allocations
County Council Adopts Budget (May 15)
Board Makes Final Allocations (June 1); Employees Informed Of RIF's
SELECTIONS
Area Associate Superintendents Inform Principals (Continuous)
Principals Review Lists, Interview Candidates, And Recommend Selections (Continuous)
Weekly Meetings Of Area Associate Superintendents, Deputy Superintendent, And Personnel To Make Administrative Assignments (June-August)
Deputy Superintendent Makes Administrative Assignments
Hire New Employees When All Relevant Involuntary Transfers And Returns From Leave Are Placed

EXHIBIT IV-2

In early November and early April, the Division of Staffing sends letters to all employees on leave asking whether they intend to return for the coming school year. A second letter is sent to employees who do not respond by late November or late April. The Division prepares a list of employees returning from leave and requiring placement early in December and May; this list also is distributed to the Area Associate Superintendents.

Vacancies are created through resignations and through position allocations made through the budget development and approval process. Supporting services employees may resign at any time, but are supposed to give two weeks' notice. Professional employees are supposed to give at least 30 days notice on or before July 15. Tentative position allocations for the following school year are announced in mid-April when the Board of Education submits its budget request to the County Council. The County Council is required by the County Charter to adopt an MCPS budget by May 15.

If the budget adopted by the County Council is so much lower than the Board of Education's request that MCPS cannot honor agreements negotiated with employees' organizations, the school system must quickly enter renegotiations pertaining to salaries and numbers of positions in order to reach new agreements in time to meet the mandated deadlines for announcing reductions in force. Thus far, such renegotiations have not been necessary.

Within 15 days of the Council's decision or by June 1, whichever comes first, the Board of Education has to determine final position allocations and inform affected employees of any reductions in force. The Deputy Superintendent then allocates positions to the three administrative areas, and the Area Associate Superintendents allocate their allotted positions to the schools within their areas using enrollment projections and other information supplied by the principals. Principals in schools with reduced allocations indicate which employees are to be transferred.

The area administrative offices, working with the Division of Staffing, are responsible for maintaining lists of all vacancies and persons requiring transfers within their areas. The official master list of authorized positions and their status (full-time or part-time, vacant or occupied) is the "Budgeted Positions Status Report," which is produced every other week by an automated system maintained by the Department of Management Information and Computer Services. This list is based on the Board's, Deputy Superintendent's, and Area Associate Superintendents' allocations. Changes in the list can be made only through the submission of a "Position Action Request" by principals through area offices to the Division of Staffing, double-checking by the appropriate team's Personnel Assistant to ensure that the requested action is

allowable (for example, ensuring that an authorized vacancy exists if a candidate is being recommended for hiring), and submission of a green "Transaction Sheet" by the Personnel Assistant. In short, the Deputy Superintendent and the Area Associate Superintendents exercise position control and the Division of Staffing monitors position control.

Principals with vacancies begin reviewing lists of involuntary transfers, persons returning from leave, and voluntary tranfers early in June, interview appropriate candidates, and submit recommendations of persons to be hired for particular positions through their own Area Associate Superintendents. Involuntary transfers and persons returning from leave are given top priority. Voluntary transfers also can be considered in June, but cannot be chosen after July 1 if involuntary transfers and/or persons returning from leave remain to be placed. No voluntary transfers are possible after August 15, unless approved by the affected principals and Area Associate Superintendents. Applicants from outside of MCPS can be considered only when all persons requiring placement in the appropriate category from within MCPS have been placed.

Starting in early June, weekly meetings of the Area Associate Superintendents, Deputy Superintendent, and Department of Personnel Services officials are supposed to be held to make administrative placements of persons not yet selected. In early July the Deputy Superintendent is supposed to begin making administrative placements directly.

SUBSTITUTES

The Division of Staffing screens applicants for substitute positions, maintains lists of approved substitutes (for teachers, cafeteria workers, clerical workers, and bus operators), and distributes substitute directories to schools. During the 1981-82 school year, the Division received 465 teacher substitute applications and by August 1982 had more than 1,830 persons on the approved list. Although records are unavailable, it appears that all applicants for teacher substitute positions are interviewed. Separate alphabetical elementary and secondary directories of approved substitutes are distributed to the area offices and schools four times annually. The schools are responsible for contacting persons from the directories when substitutes are needed.

If a substitute is needed on a "long-term" basis (between 10 and 40 consecutive days), the principal must submit a form and receive approval from the Department. Ordinarily, positions unoccupied longer than 40 days are treated as vacancies to be filled through the regular hiring process. During hiring freezes, however, long-term substitutes are used for more than 40 days.

Principals and the Department of Staffing must complete the same forms and carry out the same processing steps for long-term substitutes who are selected to fill vacancies for more than 40 days during freezes as for permanent teachers, except for the preparation of contracts. Between fiscal 1978 and fiscal 1982, the number of long-term substitutes hired by MCPS ranged from 387 (in fiscal 1979) to 578 (in fiscal 1980). In fiscal 1982, 426 long-term substitutes were hired, a 9 per cent decrease from the 470 long-term substitutes hired in fiscal 1981. Of the 426 long-term substitutes hired in fiscal 1982, 48 (11.3 per cent) were hired to fill vacant positions under the freeze. This was a 19 per cent decrease from the 59 long-term substitutes hired to fill vacant positions in fiscal 1981 and a 77 per cent decrease from the 206 long-term substitutes hired to fill vacant positions in fiscal 1978.

Principals are required to prepare evaluations of long-term substitutes but not short-term substitutes.

B - OBSERVATIONS

This section presents observations regarding strengths and opportunities for improvement in the organization and staffing, management and administration, and management processes in the Division of Staffing.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

Organization Of The Division Into Two Teams Is Appropriate

When the Division's staff was reduced in the summer of 1982, the number of Division teams was reduced from three to two. This modification was appropriate, in that the smaller number of staff members required less supervision and the reduced level of hiring activity systemwide allowed each team to provide assistance to more schools and offices. Further, the elimination of one team eliminated one supervisory position, thereby reducing the costs of operating the Division.

The organization of the Division into subunits (whether called teams or something else) is necessary, given the number of staff members to be supervised. Without subunits, the Division Director would supervise all 23 Division staff members directly. Such an arrangement clearly would result in inadequate supervision and direction and a deterioration in the quality and consistency of services provided to schools and administrative offices. Under the current structure, the Division Director supervises six employees (including the two Team Leaders, his Secretary, and three Office Assistants), one Team Leader supervises eight employees, and the other Team Leader supervises nine employees; these are acceptable supervisory workloads. Moreover, the two Team Leaders are active participants in their units' staffing activities; thus, the Division does not include a disproportionate number of managers, detracting from its ability to accomplish the necessary work.

Assignment to one team of responsibility for screening candidates for most supporting services positions and assignment to the other team of responsibility for hiring bus operators has created no difficulties. Under this arrangement, Division staff members who have the most experience with certain supporting services positions retain responsibility for those positions, and the secretary on the other team who has the most experience with the bus operator program retains responsibility in that area. The

secretary could be transferred to the team that serves the Office of Supportive Services, but there are no problems in coordination (as the bus operators program is a distinct entity) and, therefore, such a change is unnecessary.

The Assignment Of Staff Members To Specific Schools And Offices For Assistance In Hiring Is Sensible, But Requires Improved Automated Support

The Division's arguments for the generalist approach are compelling, when applied to the process of assisting supervisors in identifying and selecting candidates. These arguments do not apply to the Division's earlier screening functions, however. It is considerably more efficient and effective for staff members to develop in-depth understandings of the requirements of particular types of positions and to screen applications and applicants in those areas of expertise than to expect all staff members to understand the requirements of all types of positions. Once qualified applicants have been identified, it is easier for all staff members to assist designated supervisors in locating information on persons to be considered in filling the full range of vacancies and to provide support for the selection process. Such a distinction in responsibilities (specialists in screening, generalists in supporting selection) requires ready access to information concerning the results of screening by other staff members and about the qualified applicants, however. The existing automated systems do not provide adequate support for these functions.

Improvements In Automated Support For The Division's Activities Will Permit Reductions In Staffing

Two Personnel Assistants currently are needed for position control monitoring, largely due to the amounts of manual work required under the present system. One Personnel Assistant could handle all of the Division's position control monitoring activities with the installation of an interactive position control system. This system will provide for data entry distributed to the offices having authority to determine allocations at various levels and to approve selections to fill vacancies, with data entered immediately after decisions are made to provide up-to-date status information and eliminating the need for constantly changing manual notes on bimonthly printouts, and with CRT's in various offices and perhaps even schools reducing the need to call the Division of Staffing for information.

The Installation Of A Word Processor In The Division Will Reduce The Time Required To Perform Secretarial Functions

The new word processor will reduce the time required for the maintenance of lists, preparation of letters requiring multiple revisions, and the generation of voluminous personalized form letters. While the current number of secretaries in the Division is appropriate under present circumstances, the increased efficiencies of word processing will make possible a reduction of the Division's secretarial staff from seven to six. The resulting savings will offset the cost to MCPS of the word processing equipment.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Division Staff Is Not Balanced To Meet Seasonal Variations In Workload

The Division's workload is highly seasonal. Workload is higher between May and September when most vacancies must be filled and persons from closed schools must be transferred. Less activity is required in the other months. This is particularly true when a hiring freeze is imposed in the middle of the school year, as has been the case in each of the past few years, as there are fewer positions to be filled, fewer applications to be screened, and fewer interviews to be conducted.

While MCPS has tended to hire sufficient permanent staff to manage the peak workloads in the summer, sufficient provision has not been made to keep staff fully occupied during the late fall, winter, and early spring. Many Division staff admit to being underutilized during much of the winter. Further, this less active period is not offset by a "frantic" summer period, as some staff claim. While staff certainly are busier in the summer than in the winter, the workload does not increase sufficiently to require much overtime. The Division required only 183 hours of clerical overtime in fiscal 1982 and only 178 hours of overtime hours in fiscal 1981; this amounts to less than one hour per day of overtime each year. Additionally, these amounts are substantially less than the 562 hours required in fiscal 1978 and the 488 hours required in fiscal 1977, further demonstrating the recent reduction in the Division's workload. Staff members rarely stay beyond regular working hours or come in on weekends. As observed during July and August (two of the busiest months), most staff members were not under pressure, had time for relaxed conversations with colleagues, and in a number of instances, having

finished specific tasks (such as screening applicants and compiling information on persons to be transferred), were waiting for principals and other supervisors to complete a next step in the screening or transferring process.

Allocation Of Workload Is Insufficiently Monitored

Allocation of the Division's work between the two teams and among team members is based on informal estimates of what is required to accomplish certain tasks. No projections are available of likely numbers of vacancies to be filled and employees to be transferred in each area and organizational unit, and analyses of the time required to perform particular types of tasks have not been carried out. Consequently, assignments are made based on general impressions of what is required. Some staff members believe that one team's load under the new two-team arrangement is substantially greater than the load of the other team (which is responsible for only one area) and that some staff members are extremely busy while others have too little to do. No quantitative evidence of actual workload exists, however, on which a determination of inequity can be based.

Some Managers Fail To Delegate Work Sufficiently

Some managers tend to continue performing their former responsibilities, with which they have grown accustomed and proficient, and to allocate too little time for managerial responsibilities (such as directing staff, making and adjusting assignments, supervising work, evaluating performance, and providing advice and training) rather than reducing or eliminating time devoted to tasks that can and should be delegated to free time for management. Too little time is devoted to assessing role responsibilities and distribution of workload.

New Policies And Procedures Are Insufficiently Documented

Most new policies and procedures and other important messages are communicated to Division staff orally in meetings of the Division Director and the two team leaders, who are responsible for transmitting the messages to their team members, either by convening team meetings or by talking with members individually. Important policies and procedures are eventually documented in the Policies And Procedures Handbook, the negotiated agreements, or memorandums, but there is always a delay (sometimes lasting weeks or months) between the making of decisions and the distribution of such documentation. Written documentation ordinarily does not accompany the oral messages transmitted through the meetings. Some staff members complain that there are occasional delays in receiving some important messages, that others are distorted, and that some never reach them. Lack of awareness of policy and

procedure changes can adversely affect performance, lead to inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the advice and information given by Division staff to principals and other supervisors, and cause embarrassment for the individual or for the Department, as, for example, when secretaries give erroneous information to employees or applicants.

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Recruitment Needs Are Inadequately Analyzed

Recruitment needs are continuously changing, with fewer new hires possible in most areas, an overabundance of applicants in many areas, shortages of qualified candidates in such areas as science and mathematics, and implementation of a seven-period day, thereby requiring additional teachers in such areas as business education and foreign languages. The implications of such changes have not been systematically analyzed, nor have recruitment activities been modified as a result. For example, the number of colleges and universities visited in fiscal 1982 (70) was equal to or greater than the number of institutions visited in previous years, and most of the same institutions appear on the list year after year. While some attempt is made to focus on candidates in areas of greatest need when visiting these institutions, such efforts are impeded by placement officials who are responsible for finding positions for all of their institutions' students.

The Division does not maintain data on the results of its recruitment efforts, such as numbers of persons interviewed in specific institutions who apply for positions in specific areas, numbers of minority candidates identified and attracted by recruitment visits, and numbers of applicants who are successful in obtaining positions. Yet such information would help focus recruitment efforts on institutions having the highest likelihood of results. In addition, the absence of explicit written recruitment objectives impedes the Division's ability to establish indexes against which results can be assessed.

Disagreement exists concerning the necessity of expanded recruitment efforts in highly competitive, technical areas, such as data processing and accounting. Some observers claim that larger advertisements in more suitable national journals and newspapers - and even, perhaps, paying travel expenses for especially highly qualified candidates to attend interviews or offering to cover or assist with moving expenses - are necessary if MCPS is to attract the calibre of persons it requires. Others respond that MCPS's location, generous benefits plans, positive reputation, and respectable salaries are sufficient to attract candidates with the needed skills and that the school system is not suffering from shortages in any areas.

Another concern expressed by some MCPS officials about recruitment approaches is the reduction in numbers of unassigned contracts (contracts that are not tied to specific vacancies) in recent years. When MCPS was hiring hundreds of new teachers annually, it offered dozens of unassigned contracts to the best qualified candidates, knowing that positions would be found for all of them, in order to obtain commitments before the candidates were offered positions in other school systems. The significant reductions in new hires has led to an alteration in this practice; MCPS now offers only a few unassigned contracts each year, and then only in areas of the greatest demand. Some observers are concerned that this trend, combined with the late date at which vacancies become available (often in August), is causing MCPS to lose some of the best candidates.

Adequate Numbers Of Qualified Candidates Are Usually Available For Consideration In Filling Vacancies

MCPS managers interviewed in this study (including principals and supervisors in administrative offices) indicated that they almost always are able to interview several qualified applicants when filling positions. Because of MCPS's strong reputation and the national shortage of teaching positions in recent years, MCPS has continued to receive numerous applications annually. Further, the Department of Personnel Services has continued actively to recruit strong candidates. The eligibility lists for lower-level supporting services positions usually contain numerous qualified persons, and the Department makes special announcements for categories of positions in which few qualified persons are listed. Announcements of vacancies in A&S and higher-level supporting services positions usually result in large numbers of applications, and managers report that they rarely find the needed qualifications entirely missing from the applicant pools. When none of the applicants responding to the initial solicitation is acceptable (for example, when all candidates lack specific required technical skills), the Department of Personnel Services reopens the competition and makes another announcement soliciting additional applications.

A recent report on services provided by the Department of Personnel Services by a committee of the Secondary School Administrator's Association recommends that the Department strengthen its recruitment procedures through "more thorough college campus recruitment" and "absorption of quality teachers terminated from nearby school systems." As discussed in the preceding section, more focused college recruitment seems appropriate at this time, given the relatively small number of new hires each year and the need to concentrate the Department's efforts on other areas of needed service. More attention might be given, however, to communications with other school systems to identify highly

qualified junior teachers who are laid off because of lack of seniority and who might be interested in positions with MCPS. Such efforts should concentrate on areas of particular need, such as science and mathematics, rather than use undue amounts of MCPS's time in interviewing and otherwise considering larger numbers of teachers in areas already having surpluses of candidates, such as general elementary education.

The Use Of Eligibility Lists For Supporting Services Positions Is Efficient

The substitution of biannual blanket advertisements for large classes of entry-level supporting services positions in place of separate competitions for individual vacancies saves substantial amounts of time and increases the speed with which positions are filled. This approach minimizes repetition, enables interested persons to apply once rather than look for and respond to numerous individual announcements, and in most cases provides supervisors with rank-ordered lists of qualified candidates as soon as vacancies occur.

The use of standard criteria and numerical scores summarizing applicants' qualifications in prespecified areas is intended to improve objectivity. Concerns exist regarding this approach:

- Scores can be influenced by subjective judgments by the raters (a particular concern when applications are reviewed by only one rater).
- Assessments do not allow consideration of specific schools' and departments' special needs.
- Some principals and supervisors prefer considering more than four candidates.

These are not insurmountable problems, however. Scores on most dimensions (such as years of experience) are straightforward and cannot be influenced by subjectivity. Idiosyncratic needs can be taken into consideration in reviewing the candidates supplied from the eligibility lists. Also, principals and supervisors may request interviews with more than four candidates if they wish.

Hiring Procedures Are Systematic And Fair

The Department has taken a number of important steps to improve the objectivity, fairness, equity, and effectiveness of procedures and instruments used to screen applications, interview applicants, and make selections. These steps include the provision of opportunities for all interested persons to submit applications for consideration, the identification of the criteria

by which applications are to be evaluated, the use of validated aptitude and proficiency tests (discussed in Chapter V), the use of structured interview questions and evaluation sheets, and guidelines intended to achieve balance on hiring panels. There is room for continued improvement in specific areas, but overall the procedures are sound, more advanced than those used by most school systems, and indicative of conscientious efforts to minimize flaws.

MCPS's Equal Employment Opportunity Efforts Are Conscientious And Generally Successful

Interviews conducted during the course of this study demonstrated a widespread commitment to equal employment opportunity on the part of school system officials. Interviewees pointed to EEO as an important goal and expressed a hope that MCPS will continue, or even strengthen, its efforts in this area. No one interviewed for this study complained that the school system is not attempting to provide equal opportunities. The only concern, expressed by a few interviewees, was that, while the school system may be taking correct actions, the "spirit" of its commitment to equal opportunities may be lacking in some areas.

According to the most recent census, in 1980, 85.6 per cent of Montgomery County's population was white and 14.4 per cent was minority. According to MCPS's statistics, in fiscal 1982, 23.8 per cent of the student population was minority (including 0.2 per cent American Indian, 6.6 per cent Asian, 12.7 per cent black, and 4.3 per cent Hispanic). In the same year, 11.7 per cent of the professional staff was minority and 31.9 per cent of the supporting services staff was minority. In fiscal 1982, 12 per cent of the teachers, 17 per cent of the A&S staff, and 21 per cent of the supporting services staff who were hired or promoted were minorities. MCPS's adverse impact ratios (per cent of minority applicants hired divided by per cent of white applicants hired) are generally favorable. In fiscal 1982, the school system exceeded the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guideline (0.8) in most categories. MCPS fell short of the ratio in hiring American Indians for A&S positions, but only one American Indian applied for an A&S position. The school system also fell slightly short of the guideline in the hiring of blacks, Asians, and American Indians for supporting services positions, although the percentages of minorities in supporting services positions overall exceed County population proportions. In the eight other categories (including all categories for teaching positions), MCPS exceeded the 0.8 guideline, sometimes significantly.

The main EEO concerns at this time are that per cent of Asian staff members (currently 0.6 per cent of professional staff) falls substantially short of the student population's proportions (6.6 per cent Asian) and that minorities are not being hired in

significant enough numbers for some types of positions (such as science teachers). MCPS officials contend that these problems result from insufficient numbers of qualified applicants in these areas. For example, 2 Asians applied for A&S positions in fiscal 1982 (both of whom were hired); 67 Asians applied for teaching positions (40 of whom were hired); and 123 Asians applied for supporting services positions (49 of whom were hired).

Appropriate, Legally Allowable Information Is Requested On Applications

A review of relevant state and federal laws and regulations, MCPS regulations, and all forms used by the Department of Personnel Services (including application forms) conducted as part of this study indicates that MCPS is requesting legally allowable and appropriate information from applicants and employees. Further, an examination of the uses of such information in subsequent processing indicates that sufficient rationales exist for requesting all pieces of information and that all such information is in fact put to appropriate use. MCPS is adequately cognizant of relevant laws and regulations and is not requesting any prohibited information. For example, application forms do not request information on race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation, in order to avoid possible bias in screening activities. Instead, such information - which is required for reporting on characteristics of employees to state and federal agencies - is collected on a separate form after persons have been selected for employment.

Applications for teaching positions request comprehensive information, and applicants are required to submit letters of reference, evidence of certification, and copies of transcripts before they can be considered for interviews. Less information is required at the initial stage of application for A&S positions (where resumes suffice). Some other school systems require applicants for teaching positions to submit only letters of interest and/or minimal information for purposes of initial screening. The disadvantages of these alternative approaches, however, are that some applicants may be unfairly screened out on the basis of incomplete information and that the additional review, contact, and submission steps required are more costly and less efficient. Most applicants seem to expect that they will be required to supply the types of information requested on the MCPS application and appreciate the opportunity to have all of their qualifications considered from the beginning of the review process.

Application Files Are Not Always Secure

Application files contain some confidential information, such as references and evaluations, and therefore, it is important to ensure their security. The application file room is usually occupied by a staff member, but there are times when no one is in the room. Therefore, the open door from the reception area to the file room creates the possibility of security breaches. The door is kept open because ventilation in the file room is inadequate.

Interviewing Is Appropriately Becoming More Selective

Although no data are available, the Division claims that it has become more selective in choosing persons for interviews, in recognition of smaller numbers of vacancies and as a means of saving staff time for other required tasks. Applicants for teaching positions are not invited to interviews if they are not appropriately certified or have negative references. Some applicants are not interviewed because they would require high starting salaries due to years of experience. Percentages of applicants interviewed for supporting services positions vary by type of position, depending on demand; for example, 80 to 90 per cent of all applicants for such positions as data processing and air conditioning repair are interviewed, but only 10 to 20 per cent of applicants for positions having an overbundance of qualified candidates (such as aides) are interviewed, according to Division officials. Such selectivity in interviewing is sensible in view of current conditions and indicates an area of activity that could be even more constrained if necessary.

The Amount Of Staffing Support Provided To Managers Varies, And The Division Of Responsibilities Is Not Clearly Understood

Most supervisors interviewed in the course of this study described the Department's support for screening and selection activities in favorable terms. Most managers appreciate not having to spend more time screening applications received and view the Division's staff as able to identify the most qualified candidates. Although the procedures that have been established to optimize objectivity and fairness are time-consuming, almost all managers recognize the need for such measures and appreciate being provided with systematic guidance and structures. Some supervisors report that all initial screening is performed by the Division of Staffing and that they (the supervisors) and/or their hiring panels are presented with a smaller list of qualified persons, while others complain that they have to perform too many tasks themselves, including drafting position descriptions, drafting interview questions, selecting panel members, and screening

all applications. Some managers of small units that hire infrequently complain that they require more assistance but receive less, and that too much of their time is wasted in screening applications, a function for which they consider personnel specialists better qualified.

Responsibilities for the various activities that make up the staffing process are insufficiently clear and inadequately documented, and understandings vary among principals and other supervisors. For example, some supervisors believe that they are responsible for preparing position descriptions, while others believe that such drafting is the responsibility of the Department of Personnel Services. Some supervisors complain about having to screen large numbers of applications, while others express appreciation for the Department's work in that area. Some supervisors believe that the Department has inappropriately assumed responsibility for offering employment, while others clearly understand that school system regulations assign official responsibility for making offers of employment to the Department's Director. While some of these responsibilities are clearly documented in policies or memorandums, there is no clear, unified listing and explanation of responsibilities for all staffing activities.

Finally, some managers complain about inflexibilities in the screening and selection procedures and argue that certain positions require special types of job descriptions, the use of special tests and work performance samples, and more vigorous recruitment efforts to attract highly qualified persons in particularly competitive fields. Most school system officials support standardization, however, and worry about the possible consequences of initiating exceptions.

The Time Required To Fill Vacancies Varies, Depending On Type Of Position, The Availability Of Candidates, Level Of Other Activity, And Aggressiveness Of The Hiring Supervisor

Most interviewees recognized that the hiring of highly qualified persons in accordance with policies and procedures that provide for equal employment opportunity, open competition, and fairness often takes considerable time (weeks and sometimes months), and few interviewees complained that the time ordinarily required to hire persons in MCPS is longer than that required in other comparable organizations. The time actually consumed in filling positions does vary, however, because of a number of factors, some of which are beyond the school system's control. Lower-level supporting services positions often are filled very quickly with qualified candidates from the eligibility lists.

Teachers are often hired quickly when several qualified applicants are available. In other cases, however, the files contain no applications from teachers with specialized skills, and the Department must make phone calls or announcements to locate appropriate candidates, thereby delaying the hiring process. During some periods of the summer, Division of Staffing staff members are attempting to help fill many vacancies simultaneously, delaying their assistance to some supervisors; at other times, when they can devote their full attention to single vacancies, appropriate persons are identified and hired quickly. Some supervisors interviewed in this study stated that they attempt to expedite the hiring process by taking more initiative (for example by drafting their own position descriptions for review by the Department of Personnel Services, by hand-carrying all communications to the Department rather than relying on the interdepartmental mail, and by playing active roles in constituting hiring panels and scheduling meetings and other due dates) and that, as a result, their vacancies are filled more quickly than those in other areas where supervisors rely on the Department of Personnel Services to take the initiative.

Targeted Support Is Not Provided To Schools That Have Difficulty In Attracting Highly Qualified Teachers

As in all school systems, some schools in MCPS are reputed to experience more difficulty in attracting teachers than others. Such indexes as "Preference For Reassignment" forms show substantial variations in the numbers of teachers requesting different schools. In spite of a common awareness and recognition of this problem, the school system's rules and procedures provide no special supports or incentives designed to encourage applicants, voluntary transfers, or involuntary transfers to select schools most in need.

School-Based Personnel Decisions Are Inadequately Reviewed

It does not appear that principals' assessments of alternative candidates or the rationales supporting principals' hiring recommendations are reviewed as thoroughly as they should be. For example, the nature and quality of principals' interviews of candidates are generally recognized to vary considerably, but the lack of documentation inhibits review and remedial action. Principals are supposed to submit evaluations of all persons interviewed on standard forms (Regulation 460-1), but the common practice is to require a form for only the selected candidate, and the contents of the assessments often are phoned by principals to Division staff, who complete the forms.

The Policy Of Minimizing The Average Starting Salaries Of Entering Teachers Is Cost-Effective

The Board of Education has adopted a policy resolution establishing maximum average entry salaries for new teachers. Individual teachers may be hired above these levels, but overall averages may not exceed them. Under current circumstances, this policy is sensible in that it helps contain school system expenditures and provides increased opportunities for younger teachers, which is important to the teaching profession, to the ability of colleges of education to attract qualified students, and to a school system with reduced turnover and an aging teaching staff.

MCPS Is Successfully Minimizing Reductions In Force

The Board of Education's and Superintendent's intention of keeping reductions in force (RIF's) to a minimum is being successfully implemented, in spite of declining enrollments and consequent reductions in the number of required employees. As of November 1982, only four persons had been RIF'ed in 1982; two of these had been returned to employment, one did not wish to return, and one remained on the recall list. No one was RIF'ed in 1981. Of the 16 employees RIF'ed in 1980, 13 were returned to employment, two declined offers of reemployment, and one accepted a contract in another school system.

Employee Placement Procedures Are Sound, But Failure To Enforce Transfer Deadlines And Late Notification Of Schools' Vacancies Create Problems

The procedures for placing involuntary transfers, persons returning from leave, and voluntary transfers are systematic and sensible. Deadlines are consistent with needs, and have been structured to complete prerequisite tasks in some areas (such as preparing lists of persons needing placement) in advance of deadlines in related areas (such as allocating positions through the budget decision-making process). The process is fair to employees, supports decentralized decision-making by principals and supervisors (in some other districts surveyed in this study, the central administration simply assigns teachers and other staff to schools, with no opportunity for input or appeal by principals), and calls for the placement of employees in positions well in advance of the beginning of the school year.

The major problem with the placement procedures is that deadlines are not enforced by the school system's management and, as a result, activities fall behind and many placements are made under pressure close to the start of the school year. Specifically, area offices often are late in submitting their lists of vacancies

and persons to be transferred, and deadlines for making administrative placements (by the Deputy Superintendent and the Area Associate Superintendents) slip. The making of such placements is supposed to begin during the first week in June; this year they did not begin until the last week in July, and many were made in August. A related problem is that some principals delay in informing the Department of Personnel Services of vacancies to be created by teachers who intend to resign; the principals wish to avoid selecting persons on the transfer lists, with the hope that by the time they make selections all persons on the transfer lists will be placed and they will be able to hire new persons from outside the school system. No provisions exist for penalizing such actions.

Lists Of Persons Requiring Placement Quickly Become Outdated

Because the system for maintaining such lists is not interactive, with all transactions entered immediately upon approval and with all parties having immediate access to constantly updated information, principals and Division of Staffing personnel sometimes waste time considering persons who already have been placed.

No Limit Exists To The Number Of Offers Teachers Requiring Placement Can Reject

Numerous rejections can delay the placement process. Other school systems surveyed for this study allow teachers a limited number of rejections (usually three), after which the teachers are placed at the bottom of the list of priorities.

Voluntary Transfers Are Time-Consuming But Valued

Some observers complain that the voluntary transfer process is time-consuming and results in few transfers. In the spring of 1982, for example, only 73 teachers of 757 who applied (9.6 per cent) were actually transferred. This rate has been declining in recent years, as more schools have been closed and more involuntary transfers have been placed; in 1981, 11.3 per cent of applicants were voluntarily transferred (117 of 1,040), and in 1980, 14.0 per cent were transferred (96 of 688). The response to this complaint is that some teachers have legitimate reasons for needing transfers (such as long commutes or acrimonious relationships with principals) and that there should be an opportunity for such persons to be considered for change, particularly as job opportunities in education are declining.

Position Control Procedures Are Not Timely

The lack of an interactive automated position control system - in which all approved actions are entered immediately and officials in all relevant units can directly access up-to-date information - slows the process and sometimes causes disagreements and/or inaccuracies. Further, the area offices are not sufficiently conscientious in ensuring that information is provided punctually and that forms are prepared and submitted in a timely manner. The Personnel Assistants often must call the area offices and even the schools themselves to obtain information and often fill out the "Position Action Requests" themselves with information obtained over the phone. As a result, much time is wasted and two persons are required to perform a one-person job.

Group Sessions For Contract Signing, Completion Of Forms, And Orientation Are Efficient

The conduct of group sessions for new teachers and supporting services employees saves substantial amounts of time. Rather than repeat information regarding benefits programs and provide instructions about forms to each new employee, Division of Staffing personnel are able to perform these functions weekly or bimonthly for many new employees at once. Further, the use of the System 6 word processor to generate letters to new employees and track the status of information and forms required from them is appropriate and efficient.

Central Processing Of Substitute Applications And Provision Of Directories Are Useful Services, But Substitute Performance Is Inadequately Evaluated

MCPS's procedures for identifying and obtaining eligible substitutes provide a useful service to the schools, remove a burden from principals (in some districts surveyed in this study, principals are responsible for developing their own lists of substitutes), and reduce duplication of effort across schools. Principals interviewed in the study expressed appreciation for this service and indicated that it works well. The only desired improvement is the provision of lists of eligible substitutes by the area in which they are willing to work.

Principals are required to prepare written evaluations of long-term substitutes, but short-term substitutes' performances are not systematically evaluated. Principals sometimes informally communicate to the Division of Staffing problems they have encountered, and the Division keeps notes used in advising other principals, but the absence of an evaluation requirement can lead to repeated problems when an unacceptable substitute continues to work in different schools.

Adequate Numbers Of Qualified Substitutes Are Available

The substitute lists maintained by the Department for teaching, cafeteria worker, and bus operator positions contain sufficient numbers of adequately qualified persons. No principals or other relevant supervisors interviewed in this study complained of problems in locating qualified substitutes from the lists provided. In past years, insufficient numbers of qualified substitute bus operators were available, but a reassignment of responsibility in that area led to acceptable improvement, and satisfactory lists have been available since that time.

The Elimination Of Physicals For Most Employees Appears Effective

In 1977, the Board of Education adopted Resolution 422-77, abolishing the requirement that certain categories of employees have preemployment physical examinations. This resolution established more restricted requirements, calling only for preemployment and annual chest X-rays or skin tests for all employees and preemployment and annual physical examinations for bus operators only, in compliance with State law. The reasons cited by the Board for this new resolution were that the County Health Department had reduced physical examination services due to budget reductions, that the school system also needed to reduce costs where possible, that fewer than 10 per cent of all applicants had failed the physical examinations, and that most of those who had failed were bus operator applicants, who still would be required to have physical examinations.

This rationale is sound, the reduction in physical examinations has saved the school system substantial amounts of money, and there is no evidence of a need to change the policy. Officials in the Division of Insurance and Retirement and other relevant offices interviewed in this study have not prepared analyses of changes in the amounts of sick leave or disability claims filed since adoption of the new policy, but stated that they had detected no noticeable change, indicating an absence of concern about increases in costs resulting from the policy, and there is no evidence that costs have risen.

Controls Over The Hiring And Use Of Temporary Employees Are Inadequate

With the exception of the summer employment program, which is well organized and subject to central review and clearance, procedures for the hiring of temporary employees are less rigorous than those used in hiring permanent employees. Applicants are not screened by the Department of Personnel Services and competitions are not held. A hiring office with funds in its budget may simply

indicate to the Department whom it wishes to employ for a temporary position. Temporary positions are supposed to last no longer than six months, with exceptions approved by the Deputy Superintendent. It appears that extensions are regularly requested and approved as temporary employees are often used to compensate for reductions in permanent positions. The ease with which extensions may be obtained removes pressure from managers to ensure that work is completed in an efficient and timely manner. Managers often claim that they need temporary assistance immediately and often decide at (or even beyond) the end of a temporary employee's appointment that additional help is needed; as a result, paperwork must be processed under pressure and problems are created in maintaining accurate, up-to-date information in the PMF and in preparing the payroll. Inadequate budget controls over the use of temporary employees lead to overruns.

C - RECOMMENDATIONS

This section recommends ways of achieving the opportunities for improvement in the Division of Staffing's organization and staffing, management and administration, and management processes discussed in the preceding section.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

Team Staffing Assignments For Screening Applicants Should Remain Specialized By Type Of Position; The Generalist Approach To Assisting Principals And Supervisors Should Be Maintained And Supported By Improved Automated Support

In organizing and making assignments to professional staff members on the Division of Staffing's two teams, the Department should continue to distinguish between the requirements of screening applicants and the requirements of assisting principals and supervisors in identifying and selecting qualified candidates. Each team member should continue to specialize by type of position for purposes of screening and by organizational unit (schools, area offices, and/or departments) for purposes of providing assistance in filling vacancies. This combined approach allows for the accumulation of expertise and efficiency in screening, convenience and consistency for principals and supervisors in dealing with one Division of Staffing contact for all hiring needs, the accumulation of knowledge of individual schools' and departments' needs by staff members, and broader assignments for staff members. Each team member should be assigned a specific set of schools, and administrative departments should have a specific designated back-up, so that each principal and supervisor can deal with a single contact on a consistent basis and receive assistance from another knowledgeable staff member when the primary contact is unavailable. The generalist approach to hiring assistance should be supported by the installation of an application support system (as discussed earlier in this chapter) to improve the availability of screening results and communications among staff.

Improvements In Automated Support Should Permit The Elimination Of Two Positions

One of the two Personnel Assistant positions should be eliminated when an interactive position control system is fully implemented. The two Personnel Assistants - who are responsible for monitoring position control and for processing hiring and

transfer forms from the schools and area offices - spend at least half of their time currently performing unnecessary manual tasks and tasks that should be completed by others. Specifically, the absence of an interactive automated system requires the maintenance of extensive handwritten notes on printouts, and the frequent failure of school and area office personnel to keep the Personnel Assistants informed of hiring and transfer decisions and to submit required forms punctually requires the Personnel Assistants to devote large amounts of time to calling the schools for information and to completing forms with information supplied by principals and others over the phone. A reliable, interactive position control system should eliminate the need for extensive manual notes, reduce the number of required phone conversations with schools and area offices, and place data entry and forms submission activities with the area offices. To ensure the reduction in workload, the new system should be designed to require completion of necessary steps and preparation of necessary forms by schools and area offices before data on position allocations, placements, and hirings can be officially entered. The schools' and area offices' responsibilities in position control will have to be more strictly enforced.

In addition, the Division's secretarial staff should be reduced by one when additional word processing support is implemented. Each team's secretarial staff should be reduced from 3.0 to 2.5 FTE's, with one secretary shared between the two teams. Expansions in the use of word processing will significantly reduce the time required for many of the Division's clerical tasks, including the preparation of personalized form letters, the revision and final preparation of letters for school system officials, and the maintenance of various lists. Even with the elimination of one secretarial position, data-entry responsibilities for the new application information system (which should be restricted to the few key pieces of information about each applicant needed to identify suitable applications in filling vacancies) should be accomplished by the remaining secretarial staff.

Elimination of these two positions will save the school system approximately $54,500 annually in salaries and fringe benefits (including approximately $34,000 for one Personnel Assistant position and approximately $20,500 for one secretarial position).

Additional Planning And Improvement Projects Should Be Conducted During Less Active Periods; Temporary Assistance Should Be Provided During Busy Periods As Needed

Consistent with the Department's stronger supportive role and increased monitoring activities, as recommended in Chapter III, Division of Staffing staff members should use the less active fall, winter, and early spring months to conduct needed planning and improvement projects. Such projects would include annual updates to the school system's long-range manpower plan (and initial preparation of such a plan in 1983); analyses of emerging personnel trends, issues, and problems and anticipatory formulation of approaches to meeting such projected needs; visiting schools annually to provide counsel and to gain direct input on schools' personnel requirements; increased career counseling to school system employees and assistance with the related counseling and training functions recommended for transfer to the Department; review of principals' and supervisors' applicant interview and employee performance evaluation efforts and assistance in making needed improvements; and expanded efforts to retrain school system staff in areas of particular need. Conduct of additional activities in the less active parts of the year will improve staff productivity and provide additional service to the school system.

If the Division's increased workload in the late spring and summer increases, temporary additional assistance should be provided, rather than increasing the number of permanent staff members. To the fullest extent possible, teachers and other qualified ten-month school system employees should be hired through extended year employment (EYE) to provide temporary assistance in the busy summer months. Under the existing agreement with the Montgomery County Education Association, the school system has agreed to budget 41,500 EYE days annually. Therefore, the use of EYE days for additional assistance in the Department of Personnel Services will not require an additional cost to the school system. Further, to the extent possible, teachers and other employees with previous experience in the Department should be hired during the summer in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

Vacations By Division Of Staffing Staff Members Should Be Disallowed During The Busy Summer Months

In order to ensure the availability of assistance to principals and supervisors during the busiest periods of screening applicants, placing employees requiring transfer and returning from leave, and selecting and processing new employees, the existing policy of disallowing summer vacations by staff members

in the Division of Staffing should be strictly enforced. This prohibition should be in effect between the beginning of heightened activity in late April and the opening of school in the fall. Applicants for positions in the Division should be clearly informed of this requirement and no exceptions should be made.

Assignments Within The Division Should Be More Systematically Allocated, Monitored, And Adjusted As Necessary

Equity in workload assignments and performance evaluations should be improved through more systematic analyses of what is required in performing each of the Division's responsibilities. The Division's managers (including the Director - Staffing and the two Team Leaders) should develop comprehensive lists of tasks (reviewing application files, interviewing candidates, and so forth), estimates of average amounts of time required to complete each task, projections of workload levels in the coming year, quantitative indices of output and performance quality, and standards and objectives for individual staff members.

This information should be used in evenly distributing responsibilities among the members of each team, in communicating work standards to staff members, and in assessing their performance. All indexes and standards should be reviewed annually in view of the preceding year's experience. Adoption of this approach should improve fairness, clarify expectations, enhance the usefulness of evaluations, and improve staff performance.

Management Training Should Be Provided To The Division's Managers

All managers who have not done so should be required to receive training in fundamental management responsibilities, including planning, supervision, assigning and monitoring work, evaluating performance, and providing employees with advice, direction, and training. Particular attention should be given in the Division to the need for more delegation and even distribution of responsibility. Performance evaluations of all managers should concentrate on the adequacy with which managerial responsibilities are carried out. In selecting persons to fill managerial positions in the Division (and in all other parts of the Department and the school system), particular attention should be given to demonstrated management experience or potential.

Important Changes In Policies And Procedures Should Be Promptly Communicated In Succinct Written Form

To ensure that all Division of Staffing staff members are aware of changes in policies and procedures and other information relevant to their responsibilities, communications within the Division should be strengthened by supplementing meetings of the Director and team leaders and of the team leaders and their staffs with brief written memorandums summarizing key points. These listings need not be elaborate, and might be prepared by the Director's secretary or dictated to the secretary to minimize the time required to prepare them. Detail accompanying the main points should be communicated orally, with documentation provided soon after in the Policies And Procedures Handbook (which should be updated more regularly and promptly through an established word processing system) and in the Department's digest of personnel policies and procedures, as described in Chapter III. Division managers should ensure that all staff members are aware of important information as soon as possible and that changes are made immediately in the information provided by staff members to outside inquirers, applicants, and other school system employees.

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Recruitment Efforts Should Be Improved Through More Systematic Analysis Of Staffing Needs, Documentation Of Focused Goals, And Analysis Of Recruitment Results

Continued reductions in the numbers of new hires each year call for a sharpening of focus and a scaling back of unnecessary effort in the Division's recruitment activities. All evidence of needs - including the results of the long-range manpower planning called for elsewhere in this report, as well as recent hiring and application trends - should be used to identify areas in which outside applicants are most needed. Specific annual recruitment objectives should be established based on such analysis, and recruitment activities should be structured to meet these objectives. Further, the Division should develop a system for collecting and analyzing information about the results of annual recruitment activities, including the number of applications received from each institution visited, the number of persons hired from each institution visited, and the performance of persons recruited from specific institutions. Particular attention should be given to identifying institutions that consistently provide the best minority candidates, for EEO purposes. Each year recruitment visits should be focused on those institutions with the best results in the past. Contacts in other institutions can be kept active through periodic phone calls.

Larger expenditures on advertisements are not warranted at this time, given the continuing decline in turnover and the abundance of qualified applicants in most areas. MCPS should continue its policy of placing larger ads in national journals and newspapers for selected positions, however, when it can be shown that the usual ads in metropolitan area publications are not yielding satisfactory results. Subsidies for travel to interviews by especially qualified candidates, which would require substantial funds, are not warranted at this time.

The current policy of tightly limiting unassigned contracts is sensible and should be continued. Offering greater numbers of such contracts could increase the number of overhires each year. Improved manpower planning should provide the Department with more reliable projections of needs, however, and it may be possible to offer more unassigned contracts in targeted areas of need with greater confidence that positions will be found for all persons given such contracts.

Procedures For Transferring Employees And Allocating New Positions Should Be Modified To Assist Schools Having Obstacles To Attracting Teachers

To achieve a more even distribution of the school system's most talented teachers among schools, special consideration should be given to schools having demonstrable difficulties in attracting teachers and special incentives should be given to teachers to select such schools. For example, such schools might be given first opportunity to select transfers, persons returning from leave, and new hires. Consideration should be given to establishing special programs in these schools to attract particularly talented teachers looking for new challenges; these teachers might be given extra compensation to organize and coordinate such programs. Also, MCPS might consider the possibility of compensatory compensation for teachers who choose to work in schools that have experienced the most difficulties in the past. Criteria for approving and selecting voluntary transfers might be modified to favor persons willing to move to particular schools, and such persons might be placed in a higher priority category on the transfer eligibility list.

Selection Activities Should Be Improved Through More Specific Guidance, Enforcement Of Documentation Requirements, And Closer Monitoring

The achievement of equity and consistency of selection activities in a decentralized system requires adherence to agreed-upon rules and criteria. Principals and other supervisors should understand and conscientiously implement all of the school system's personnel regulations and procedures. Development and

annual updating of a policies and procedures digest by the Department, recommended elsewhere in this report, should assist in this respect. These administrators should be provided specific guidance in screening, interviewing, and selection techniques through appropriate workshops, such as those now offered in the Department of Staff Development. They should be required to attend at least one such workshop initially and to attend additional workshops every two or three years to ensure updated awareness of changing regulations and procedures.

The provisions of Regulation 460-1, requiring the completion of evaluation forms for all persons interviewed for vacancies, should be monitored by the Department of Personnel Services and enforced by the Superintendent and his top staff. The Board of Education should indicate that it expects such enforcement, and the Superintendent should indicate to the Department that he expects careful monitoring. The evaluations completed by principals and supervisors of persons not selected for particular positions should be maintained in files on those positions, rather than in the applicants' files, to avoid the possibility of unfairly biasing subsequent screening by other principals or supervisors. The Director - Staffing should continue to carefully review all hiring recommendations, ensuring that all evaluation forms have been completed, that the correct procedures and criteria have been used, that there is an appropriate and convincing rationale for selecting the recommended candidate, and that sufficient reasons have been provided if qualified minority candidates are not recommended for selection.

Procedures For Processing New Hires Should Be Further Streamlined Through Improved Automated Support

The design of the new automated human resources system should ensure that new employees are asked to supply each piece of required information only once and that each datum is entered into the computer only once. When a new employee is hired, all relevant information from the person's application form should be entered. At the orientation and contract signing session, the new employee should receive a printout which includes all already entered information for verification and requests all additional needed information. The printout should be coded to permit direct data entry from this form, without transferring the information to another coded sheet. After the signing of this contract, only the new data will have to be entered. The costs and benefits of using optical scan sheets for this purpose should be determined during design and development of the new system; if there are no obstacles to using op scan forms, substantial amounts of time can be saved in the data entry process.

Part-Time Positions Should Be Established Where Appropriate To Reduce Costs

Part-time positions have various advantages and disadvantages, all of which should be carefully considered by the school system in determining when and where such positions should be established. The primary advantage of part-time positions is the opportunity to reduce costs. Employees who work less than half time do not receive benefits (which cost MCPS 13.6 per cent of salary) and often put extra effort into their work. The school system receives service from two half-time teachers that often equals and may exceed the service of one full-time teacher. Positions such as cafeteria workers and bus operators are necessarily part-time, as such services are required only during specific periods of each day. Many employees in supporting services positions are earning second incomes for their families and do not require or want full-time jobs. Moreover, Montgomery County has a large pool of welleducated, certificated persons who are qualified to teach but who do not wish to work full-time; such persons are often effectively and appropriately used in specialized subject areas where limited student demand requires less than a full-time teacher.

On the other hand, certain types of part-time positions can have several significant disadvantages. Part-time teachers may be less committed to the school or school system than full-time teachers, are often unavailable for important faculty meetings, tend to be less active members of the school community, and may waste considerable time in traveling from one school to another. Generally, the most highly qualified candidates for teaching positions are interested only in full-time positions. Too great a reliance on part-time positions can reduce the size and quality of the pool of available candidates, reduce the reputation and attractiveness of the school system as an employer, lower the quality and effectiveness of the staff, and increase the hiring workload, thereby requiring increased staffing in the Department of Personnel Services.

In view of these advantages and disadvantages, in considering the establishment of part-time positions MCPS should carefully assess the requirements of each position, assess the characteristics of the candidate population to determine whether sufficiently qualified persons will apply for part-time positions, distinguish between teaching and supporting services positions, and distinguish between elementary and secondary teaching positions.

Principals who recommend reducing specific positions from full-time to part-time in response to budget reductions should be required to submit justifications, including data-based evidence of enrollments in specific subject areas for the coming year.

Such changes should be allowed only when warranted by preregistration figures. Also, when deciding whether to make such reductions, the principal and the approving officials should project possible consequences, such as declaring capable teachers surplused after a year of part-time service.

Transfer Procedures, Particularly Deadlines, Should Be Enforced

MCPS should continue to use the procedures it has developed for allocating vacancies and for placing involuntary transfers, persons returning from leave, voluntary transfers, and new hires, but the specified deadlines should be strictly enforced to improve the procedures' effectiveness and to ensure placement of all employees as early in the summer as possible. More specifically:

- The Department should complete its lists of all persons requiring placement by the middle of May.

- The Deputy Superintendent should allocate positions to areas by the end of May.

- Area Associate Superintendents should allocate positions to schools within one week of receiving their area allocations.

- Principals should attempt to make selections within two weeks of receiving their allocations (and should begin reviewing files earlier than the official allocations are decided, if it seems clear that they will have vacancies).

- The Deputy Superintendent and Area Associate Superintendents should begin making administrative placements in June, with the objective of placing all persons by late July.

Late notification of vacancies by principals should be carefully investigated by the Department. If it can be demonstrated that a teacher delayed notification of intent to resign for some reason, the teacher should be released with prejudice. Instances in which principals delay notification or encourage the teacher to delay notification should be treated as significant departures from fulfillment of professional responsibility.

Employees on transfer and returning from leave lists who reject three offers by schools should be placed in a lower priority category, to be considered only when all persons in higher categories have been placed.

Position Control Procedures Should Be Strengthened Through Enforcement Of Responsibiliites And Improved Automation

The recommended improvements in timeliness of the placement and hiring procedures will require improvements in the position control operation. Specifically, schools and area offices should be required to submit information and forms punctually, and an interactive position control monitoring system should be installed. The persons in the area offices designated as responsible for monitoring position control in their areas (and whose classifications were upgraded when this responsibility was added) should be held accountable for punctuality and adherence to procedures in their areas. If one school submits the required documentation supporting a hiring recommendation later than another school phones in its request to hire the same person, the school following the correct procedures should be given priority.

The timeliness and accuracy of this entire process will be enhanced by the planned installation of an automated system that enables immediate entry of information about allocations, placements, and hires by authorized officials and access to complete, up-to-date information by all relevant central office, area office, and school officials through accessible terminals.

Substitutes Should Be Evaluated

MCPS should adopt a brief, simple form for the evaluation of all long- and short-term substitutes (indicating adequacy of performance and any comments likely to be of use to Departmental staff and other principals in determining eligibility to remain on the list, in making referrals, and in selecting substitutes). Principals should be required to submit an evaluation within a week of the completion of each substitute's assignment. The Division of Staffing should review evaluations to determine whether indicated problems are sufficiently serious to warrant immediate removal from the list (which should be communicated to all schools in writing) or careful rescreening before the next list is produced.

Lists Of Substitutes By Area Should Be Provided

When the substitute module of the new automated human resources system is in place and capable of producing the substitute lists, elementary and secondary lists should be produced by area, including all approved substitutes who have indicated a willingness to work in a particular area and excluding persons wishing to work only in other areas. The provision of more focused lists will facilitate the schools' identification of suitable candidates.

Controls Over The Hiring And Use Of Temporary Employees Should Be Improved

The extensive use of temporary employees in MCPS requires the installation of more systematic procedures for determining eligibility, selecting qualified persons for specific assignments, ensuring adherence to budgets, and determining the efficacy of requested extensions. The Department should build on the procedures established for developing eligibility lists for entry-level supporting services positions and the procedures used for the summer employment program in developing procedures for compiling lists of persons qualified to provide temporary assistance. Supervisors needing temporary assistance should draw from this list or submit evidence that a designated candidate not on the list is particularly qualified to perform the required tasks. The Department should check official budget records before processing the necessary papers to ensure that the requested support does not exceed approved resources. Requested extensions should not be approved unless authorized by appropriate officials. If additional funds are needed, extensions or additional hiring should not be allowed unless authorized officials have approved line item transfers or increases. To ensure careful tracking of expenditures, if a temporary employee is asked by a unit supervisor to work longer than authorized, funds used to cover the additional work could be deducted from the unit's budget in the following year.

V - DIVISION OF SALARY ADMINISTRATION, CERTIFICATION, AND RECORDS

This chapter discusses the activities of the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. It first presents background information on the Division's organization, budget, and major responsibilities and then sets forth observations regarding both strengths of the Division and opportunities for improvement. The chapter concludes with study recommendations designed to capitalize on opportunities identified during the study.

A - BACKGROUND

This section discusses Division organization and staffing and related policies and procedures regarding employee classification, pay and benefits, leave, records maintenance, testing, certification, and performance evaluation.

ORGANIZATION AND BUDGET

The Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records is responsible for developing classification and pay recommendations, for administering state certification rules for teachers and administrators, and for administering an employee testing program. The Division also processes employee performance evaluations, maintains manual hard copy and automated personnel files, and produces various automated reports for management and other users.

The Division has a 1982-83 budget of $624,147 and a budgeted staff of 25 full-time employees. For part-time clerical staff, $14,232 is budgeted; there is no allocation for extended year employment or clerical overtime. The Division's budget has grown moderately since 1979, approximately 6.6 per cent annually. Division personnel have decreased from 30 to 25 since 1977.

The Division is organized as illustrated in Exhibit V-1 on the following page. A Director, aided by a secretary, manages the Division's operations. The Director reports to the Director and Assistant Director of Personnel Services. A Classification Specialist is primarily responsible for maintaining the classification system of MCPS, ensuring that new and existing positions are placed in the appropriate location on the various pay scales to guarantee internal and external equity. A Personnel Assessment

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

CURRENT PLAN OF ORGANIZATION DIVISION OF SALARY ADMINISTRATION, CERTIFICATION, AND RECORDS

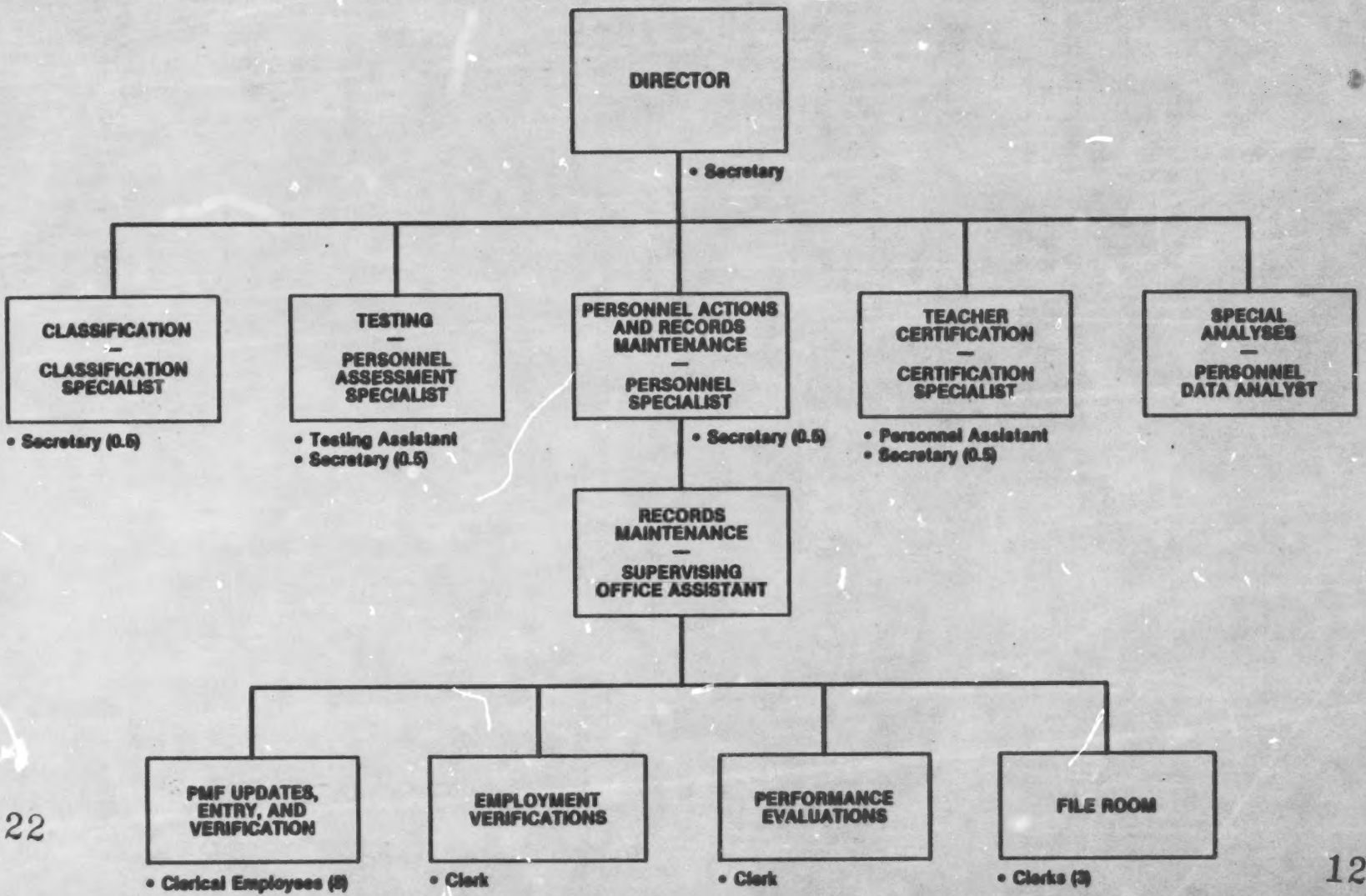


EXHIBIT V-1

Specialist, aided by a Testing Assistant, is responsible for developing, validating, and administering screening tests to employment applicants. Both the Classification Specialist and the Personnel Assessment Specialist report to the Division Director.

A Personnel Specialist performs a variety of classification, certification, and special projects work and oversees the records maintenance function within the Division. The Personnel Specialist usually is the acting Director in the Division Director's absence. A Supervisory Office Assistant, who reports to the Personnel Specialist, manages most records maintenance activities, overseeing a staff of 13 clerical employees. Records maintenance activities consist primarily of entering data on employee salary, grade, location, certification status, and so forth into the automated Personnel Master File (PMF); performing written employment verifications; ensuring that performance evaluations are performed as required; and maintaining hard-copy files of records on all permanent employees. As shown in Exhibit V-1, eight clerical employees are involved in the maintenance of the automated PMF, one employee handles written employment verifications, another employee coordinates the completion of performance evaluations, and three clerical employees maintain the permanent file room.

A Certification Specialist, who reports to the Director and is aided by a Personnel Assistant, is responsible for certifying that teachers meet state minimum requirements and handles any employment contingencies on teacher contracts. He also counsels teachers regarding certification requirements and verifies that teachers have met the minimum educational requirements to advance to the next lane on the teacher salary scale.

The Personnel Data Analyst, who also reports to the Division Director, analyzes personnel statistics, prepares periodic personnel reports, and provides analysis and information to staff and the public as needed.

In addition to the Division Director's secretary, two other secretaries support Division activities.

CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION

Salary Schedules

MCPS has, beginning with fiscal 1983, the equivalent of four separate pay schedules. All employees except a few high-level administrators (including the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent) fall under these schedules.

The Supporting Services group of employees, which is represented by the Montgomery County Council of Supporting Services Employees (MCCSSE), is composed of most nonteacher, noncertificated personnel in MCPS. It includes clerical employees,

teachers' aides, trades personnel, building service workers, and a fairly large number of noncertificated, college educated personnel (budget analysts, classification specialists, computer systems programmers, and so forth). The salary schedule, which is based on an hourly wage, has 30 pay grades and seven steps in each pay grade. The annual equivalent pay rates currently range from a low of $9,630 to a high of $45,676.

The teacher pay scale is based on ten-month employment and provides for three grades and 15 steps plus three longevity steps. The three pay grades (a fourth pay grade exists for certain older employees only) are determined by level of education. The first grade requires only a bachelor's degree; the second requires a master's degree or master's equivalent; and the third grade requires a master's degree plus 30 semester hours of graduate classes. A teacher can move from one grade to another by completing the required degree or courses. A new teacher with a bachelor's degree has a starting salary of $14,114; the maximum teacher salary is $32,491. Teachers also can receive annual stipends varying from several hundred dollars to $2,700 for assuming responsibility for extracurricular or nonteaching duties such as athletic coaching, sponsoring a senior class, or acting as the drama coach.

Both the teachers and a number of 12-month professional personnel (for example, personnel specialists) are members of the unit represented by the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA). The 12-month professionals in this union have a separate pay scale consisting of four grades and ten steps. The minimum annual salary for these employees is $26,353 and the maximum is $47,347.

The final salary schedule is for Administrative and Supervisory personnel. Personnel in this group include principals, assistant principals, department and division directors and assistant directors, and a few others. Personnel on this scale are represented by the Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel. The schedule consists of six grades of 10 steps each with a minimum 12-month salary of $25,284 and a maximum of $54,115.

Employee Classification

As noted earlier, MCPS has four separate pay scales, one for supporting services employees, one for teachers, and two for 12-month professional and Administrative and Supervisory personnel. The classification process involves analyzing job content, demands of the job, minimum qualifications for a person to fill the job, and so forth to determine the appropriate grade or position on the pay scale for that particular job. The Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records makes recommendations to the Superintendent and Board of Education regarding the proper classification of positions. The Division reviews and determines the

suitable classification of positions when new jobs are created, when existing jobs are modified significantly, or when employees request a reclassification, usually because of perceived inequities. The Division performed approximately 70 classification analyses during the last school year.

Since 1977, the Division has performed three major reclassification studies as a result of perceived large-scale problems in classification of groups of employees. One study of all secretarial, clerical, aide, and some related paraprofessional positions involved reviewing approximately 2,400 employees in approximately 100 job classifications. With the help of consultants, a factor evaluation system, adapted from one used by the Federal Government, was developed and used to classify the jobs. This factor evaluation system scores each position on nine different factors (knowledge required by the position, complexity of the job, physical demands of the job, and so forth). Total point scores are converted to salary grades on the Support Services Salary Scale. The Division continues to use this factor evaluation system for classifying new or changed clerical positions.

The Division also performed major classification studies of Administrative and Supervisory (A&S) and senior supporting services (generally grades 20 and above) positions. These studies, performed between 1977 and 1979, also involved developing factor evaluation systems. The factor evaluation system for A&S positions scores jobs according to 17 different factors (such as organizational size, degree of supervision required, knowledge required, and so forth). The Division continues to use this factor evaluation system for new or revised A&S positions. The factor evaluation system used for senior supporting services positions is similar.

When classifying nonclerical and non-A&S positions, such as trades and crafts positions, Division personnel use a more informal, comparative approach, comparing the difficulties and training for the subject job with existing jobs and grading the job accordingly. Pay of local competing jurisdictions for similar jobs is also factored into the job classification system.

Salary Administration

When an employee first accepts a position, he or she is assigned to a particular salary step (usually the first or near the first step) on the grade's salary schedule. Thereafter, if the employee's annual performance evaluation is at least satisfactory, his or her salary step will be increased one step. This step increase will result in a raise of anywhere from approximately 2.5 per cent to more than 6.0 per cent in salary. When employees reach the top of the salary scale for their grade, they can no longer obtain salary increases except for across-the-board adjustments to the salary scales. Supporting services employees

and teachers, however, can receive up to three longevity increases. For supporting services employees, longevity increases are provided upon completion of 10, 14, and 18 years of creditable service. For teachers, longevity increases are provided after 10 years of creditable employment with MCPS and 19 years of total creditable experience; beginning after 15 creditable years of employment with MCPS and 24 years of total creditable experience; and beginning after 20 creditable years of employment with MCPS and 29 years of total creditable experience.

As a result of bargaining with the three unions that represent MCPS employees and upon approval by the Board of Education and funding by the Montgomery County Council, the salary scales are modified annually. These adjustments generally increase salaries across the board. Virtually all employees receive these increases.

MCPS has several policies that can modify the normal pay policies outlined above. For example, if an employee is transferred to a position graded lower than his existing position, because of the elimination of his or her position, his or her salary is protected. The employee will assume the step on the new grade structure comparable to his existing salary. If, however, his or her current pay exceeds the maximum salary for his or her new position, the employee's salary will be maintained without any increase (including across the board) until it falls within the new position's range. These are called red-circled assignments.

MCPS also has programs for granting special pay increases or bonuses to employees (except teachers) whose performance is considered exceptionally high. In fiscal 1981, 12 professional employees received accelerated step increments; in fiscal 1982, 9 supporting services employees received cash awards (averaging $333) and 3 received accelerated salary increments as a result of this policy. Beginning in fiscal 1983, up to 10 per cent of the A&S employees are eligible for bonuses of $1,000 if their work performance is considered exceptional.

Employee Benefits

MCPS offers employees a full range of employee benefits including medical, vision, dental, and liability insurance; annual, sick, academic, and professional leave (explained in detail below); and retirement benefits. These benefits are generally comparable to benefits provided in many local government agencies.

Several specific aspects of these benefits should be noted, however. The cost of the insurance benefits are split between MCPS and employees based on the number of years an employee has been in the employee benefit plan and the negotiating unit to which employees belong. For example, teachers with less than four years in the benefit plan pay 40 per cent of their insurance benefit costs; teachers with more than 12 years in the plan pay only

15 per cent of the costs. The sharing formulas vary somewhat among the negotiating units. The retirement plans include state and County sponsored programs, depending on the type of employee and the year employed.

RECORDS MAINTENANCE

One of the Division's primary and most time-consuming tasks is the maintenance of various employee records. The primary records maintained are the automated Personnel Master File (PMF), salary history cards, locator cards, certification files, and hard-copy general personnel files.

The Personnel Master File (PMF) is the basic automated system for maintaining data on individual employees. A wide variety of data is stored on the PMF, ranging from an employee's social security number to home address to the budget account for the position he or she is filling. In total, more than 300 pieces of information can be stored on the PMF regarding one employee. The Department of Personnel Services is responsible for general maintenance of the PMF and for controlling budgeted positions. Other Departments are, however, the actual primary users of the data stored on the PMF. Primary users include, for example, the Division of Payroll and the Division of Insurance and Retirement. The PMF carries data on salary, working hours, and tax and other withholding information necessary for calculating the payroll and for determining how much should be paid to the MCPS insurance carriers.

The Department of Personnel Services, however, controls many of the central elements in the PMF. Only the Department of Personnel Services can create a file (allowing an individual to be paid), authorize a salary and hours worked, transfer an employee, and terminate an employee. While other departments use the PMF and can enter certain data into it (tax withholding rates, for example), they cannot do anything with the PMF until the Department of Personnel Services has taken initial actions. Moreover, if the Department issues incorrect or inadequate data, otherdivisions must deal with the consequences. For example, enteringincorrect hours scheduled to work or failing to enter a new employee's record in a timely manner can lead to an employee notbeing paid even though he or she submitted time vouchers correctly.

Responsibility for approving data for entry in the PMF is split between the Division of Staffing and the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. Certification data and salary data are entered by the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. Entries affecting employees' assignments and locations must be authorized by the Division of Staffing.

The process for changing PMF data by Salary Certification for an existing file involves the following steps. A member of the Division of Staffing writes a Transaction Sheet describing what actions should be taken, signs it, and takes it to the Division of Salary Administration with back-up documents. A senior clerk then reviews the documents for accuracy, clarity, proper approval (signature), and action; pulls the salary history card of the employee; and notes any special instructions on the actual data entry process on the transaction sheet. The item then goes to a data entry clerk who codes the PMF entry data onto coding sheets and then enters the data onto computer tape by using remote terminals.

The PMF master file is actually updated overnight by running the daily changes tape against the master file. When the PMF is updated, several documents are generated: a multipart Personnel Action Notice (PAN) summarizing the action; a transaction printout listing all transactions on the PMF; and an error printout listing all entries that appear to be in error based on computer program editing techniques. These documents plus the original authorization data are reviewed by a verification clerk for accuracy. If no errors are found, the authorization original, the PAN's, and the updated salary history card are returned to the data entry clerk for distribution. The computer room staff send copies of the PAN to the Division of Payroll. The clerk sends copies of the PAN to the employee and his or her principal or director; refiles the salary history card; and sends other documents to the file room for filing. If errors are found by the verification clerk, the errors are noted and returned to the data entry clerk for correction and the verification process begins again the next day.

The process for creating a new employee file on the PMF is similar except, because of the large amounts of data to be entered, the data entry clerks merely enter the necessary information on a preprinted, coding form, called a post-employment data sheet. This information is then keypuched by employees of the Division of Data Processing Operations. The rest of the process remains the same, including the overnight updating of the PMF and the verification of changes.

Changes to the PMF are generally made the same day if they are received by the Division of Salary Administration by noon, and by the next day if received after noon. As noted in the MORE Report On The Payroll System, however, taking certain actions may require two days because of idiosyncracies in the PMF.

Eight clerks in the Division of Salary Administration are involved in maintaining the PMF almost full time. The lead clerk verifies the accuracy of the authorizations, distributes work, and resolves problems; five clerks have data entry responsibilities; and two clerks verify the accuracy of the PMF updates. A few of

these clerks spend some time on other responsibilities, such as maintaining the certification files, but all spend a majority of their time on PMF maintenance.

Salary history cards are five-inch by eight-inch index cards that summarize an employee's employment history. Data included on the cards are name, social security number, current work location, the date of employment, and summary data on each employment action (effective date, type of action, position, hours, salary, last evaluation, and so forth). The cards are maintained manually. Each time a change to the PMF is made, the same clerk who enters the change into the remote terminal or submits the record to key-punching enters the revised personnel data on the salary history cards.

The cards are filed alphabetically by current employment location and maintained in a large container. Clerks use the cards as easy reference documents for answering questions regarding employees' salary, such as when an employee's next pay raise is scheduled or why the number of hours of work changed. By referring to the cards to answer questions, the clerks can avoid the time-consuming task of going to the file room, pulling the employee's bulky file, and reviewing irrelevant data to find the information desired. An estimated 1.5 to 2.0 person-years of effort are expended annually to maintain these salary history cards.

Locator cards are five-inch by eight-inch index cards that contain a limited amount of information regarding each employee. Locator cards contain the following information: name, date of birth, social security number, date of employment, work location and position, date assigned to current job, and home address and phone number. The cards are filed alphabetically by name in a large container in the file room. The three clerks maintain the accuracy of these cards, updating them as necessary; the clerks who maintain the PMF data, however, type new locator cards when someone is hired.

The locator cards are used to answer phone requests regarding confirmation of employment with MCPS, which are referred to the file room. Clerks in the file room use the cards to provide position title and date of employment to callers. According to MCPS rules, to protect the privacy of personal information, the clerks will only confirm the accuracy of data on the locator cards other than position title and date of employment. Additional information will be provided only upon written request. The locator cards are used as a time-saving device so that clerks do not have to pull the employee's full file to obtain the necessary information. The Division receives an estimated 9,000 telephone employment verification requests annually.

Certification files are maintained by the Division on all teachers, in addition to the master hard-copy personnel files. These certification folders contain copies of grade transcripts, any existing Maryland teaching certificates, a working list of all graduate courses taken, the number of semester hours, the college and date taken as well as the grade. Those individuals approved by the state to certify teachers use these files to determine whether teachers are eligible for new or renewal certifications and whether they have met requirements to qualify for a new salary lane. These separate files are maintained so that the bulky master personnel files need not be pulled each time a certification review is requested. The clerks who maintain the PMF and the certification secretary prepare and maintain these files.

The master hard-copy personnel files are the permanent MCPS records of employment actions for each employee. These records include the employee's application, references, performance evaluations, copies of personnel actions (salary changes, job changes, and so forth), awards, disciplinary actions taken, and so forth. A file room staff of three clerks maintain these files. They receive copies of all personnel actions, including new hires, and file these papers in each employee's file in a specified order. The clerks limit access to these files, normally allowing only Department of Personnel Services employees to see them. In some circumstances, such as when an employee has applied for another job in MCPS, supervisors or potential supervisors of employees have access to these files. Employees may review their own files, in the presence of a Department employee, with the exception of limited confidential data, such as references.

In addition to maintaining the files, the file room clerks are responsible for entering home address and phone number changes and committee assignments onto the PMF. The file room, with the assistance of other Department personnel, has begun a process of reviewing all files to ensure that only necessary data are maintained and that they are in the proper order.

TESTING

The MCPS personnel testing program is managed by a Personnel Assessment Specialist, who is assisted by a Testing Assistant and a part-time secretary. The Personnel Assessment Specialist researches, develops, and validates testing instruments; develops forms and procedures for structured interviews and other assessment techniques; conducts analyses to determine appropriate eligibility scores on tests; conducts research on the predictive value of various indexes, including test scores, structured interview results, recommendations, and years of experience; develops methods of combining scores on different indexes; drafts needed policies for the testing program; conducts research and development relating to performance evaluations; supervises the collection of adverse impact data required by the Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission (EEOC); and conducts studies of the Division of Staffing's selection activities. The Testing Assistant administers and scores tests given to applicants.

The purposes of the testing program are to provide a valid, nondiscriminatory, comprehensive basis for selecting applicants with the highest probability of continued success in MCPS positions; to screen out persons who are not qualified for positions; and to provide applicants with specific information on areas of needed improvement. Three types of tests are required: aptitude tests for entry-level supporting services positions; proficiency tests for skilled trade positions and promotional supporting services positions; and proficiency tests for English and foreign language teaching positions. Supporting services aptitude tests, which do not have minimum qualifying cut-off points, are taken by applicants for entry-level general clerical, secretarial, teacher aide, instructional materials aide, special education aide, building services, school lunch, and maintenance positions. Supporting services proficiency tests, for which minimum qualifying scores have been established, are taken by applicants for promotional building services, satellite worker, cafeteria manager, electronics, carpentry, electrical, automotive serviceman, automotive mechanic, heating serviceman, and school business manager positions.

To be further considered for such positions, applicants must achieve designated minimum qualifying scores. Teacher proficiency tests are required of applicants for English, Spanish, French, German, and elementary and early childhood education positions. Candidates for these positions also must achieve at least the designated minimum qualifying scores to be further considered. The elementary and early childhood education instrument tests applicants in four areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The Personnel Assessment Specialist currently is developing a test covering English language skills and mathematics for all applicants for secondary teaching positions. The validation study includes comparisons of pilot teachers' test scores with various indexes of job performance. MCPS's goal is to eventually have valid proficiency tests in all subject areas.

The testing program administers an average of 3,000 tests to 2,500 applicants annually. Testing times range from 20 minutes to 1.5 hours. Testing instructions are given on tape or in writing, thereby allowing the Testing Assistant to accomplish other tasks while applicants are taking the tests. The program's fiscal 1983 budget is $1,600, all of which is used to purchase commercial tests. The aptitude tests, which have been used for ten years, are commercial. The proficiency tests are developed in house. All tests are validated by the Personnel Assessment Specialist. Test development activities include review by MCPS subject specialists, item analysis, pilot tests, and correlations of test scores, applicant characteristics, and indexes of job performance.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The State of Maryland has developed a program establishing minimum requirements for teachers to be allowed to teach in Maryland. Teachers who meet these minimum requirements are certified as approved teachers, administrators, and supervisors. The certification requirements vary from subject area to area and by type of certification. Although the State of Maryland issues the certifications, it has authorized a few school districts in the state to act as its agents in reviewing scholastic records and determining qualifications for the certificates. Montgomery County is one of those school districts in the state to be so authorized.

To be able to approve certificates (the actual certificate forms are issued by the state), MCPS personnel must be trained by the state in certification requirements and MCPS must maintain a low error rate in its issuances. The Division of Salary Administration has four individuals trained and qualified to issue certificates, although the Certification Specialist and Personnel Assistant perform most of the certificate reviews. MCPS has maintained an error rate well below the maximum 2 per cent allowed by the state.

Certification reviews are usually performed when the Division of Staffing is considering an employment candidate, immediately prior to hiring a teacher, when a teacher wishes to obtain a certificate in additional areas, and when certificates must be renewed. Depending on the type, normal certificates are issued for periods of five or ten years. Renewal of a certificate requires completion of several academic courses.

The Certification Section of the Division of Salary Administration is responsible for administering the entire certification process. To facilitate the renewal process, the Section has developed a computer printout, using certification data stored on the PMF, that prints the names of those persons due for certificate renewal. The Section reviews the certification records of these employees to determine if they have completed the requirements necessary for a certificate renewal. On the basis of these reviews, letters are sent to teachers notifying them that they need only send in their application fee or that they must complete one or more courses to renew their certificate. Notifications are mailed sufficiently early to allow teachers to complete any necessary courses. The Section handles most of the paperwork involved in obtaining the certificates from the state.

The Certification Section also reviews requests for changes in salary lane changes from teachers. Teachers may receive increased pay when they have obtained a master's degree or have taken a certain number of graduate courses.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

MCPS requires that the performance of all employees be evaluated by their supervisors periodically. Supporting services employees must be formally evaluated at the end of a probationary period (usually a six-month period) and annually thereafter until the top of the pay scale is reached; from then on, evaluations are required every three years. Teachers must be evaluated once each semester until they receive tenure and every three years thereafter. Special evaluations of personnel are always allowed and under certain circumstances more frequent performance evaluations can be required.

The Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records is responsible for ensuring that performance evaluations are conducted as required. One clerk, who reports to the Supervising Office Assistant, has the primary responsibility for administering this program. Using the PMF data files, this clerk periodically obtains data for employees whose performance evaluations are due within the next several months. These data include: a list of employees and the due dates of their performance evaluations; for teachers and supporting services personnel, computer-generated performance evaluation forms printed with the employee's name, location, and other personal information already on the form; and prepunched computer key punch cards indicating that the performance evaluation was satisfactory or better, also printed automatically.

The clerk mails to employees' supervisors the evaluation forms about two months before they are due, asking that they be returned at least two weeks before an employee's anniversary date. Completed performance evaluations are returned to the clerk, who notes their return and then submits the preprinted keypunch cards to Data Processing for updating the PMF (unless a deferral is recommended). Updating of the PMF is verified by the records maintenance verification clerks. If supervisors do not return the evaluations on time, the clerk calls to remind the supervisors of the need for the evaluations. If that approach is unsuccessful, as many as three separate written reminders are mailed, with copies sent to higher-level supervisors.

Timely submission of evaluations for supporting services and A&S employees are critical to keeping employees' pay accurate. If the evaluations are satisfactory or better and employees have not reached the top of their pay scale, employees move up one step on the pay scale, and receive a pay increase of from approximately 2.5 per cent to more than 6.0 per cent. While employees will receive retroactive pay increases if the evaluations are satisfactory but late, generating a retroactive pay raise increases the work of the Division of Payroll substantially.

B - OBSERVATIONS

This section of the chapter presents study conclusions regarding strengths and opportunities for improvement within the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

A Full-Time Personnel Specialist To Oversee Records Maintenance And Perform Miscellaneous Tasks Appears Unnecessary

The Personnel Specialist spends an estimated one-half of his time overseeing the Records Maintenance functions. The need for this supervision is not evident, however, and may be counterproductive.

Records Maintenance has a full-time supervisor, who should be able to provide most routine supervision. Having a second supervisor spend one-half of his time on this function would appear to diminish the authority of the full-time supervisor. This added layer of management tends to isolate the Division Director from the Records Maintenance clerks.

The other responsibilities of the Personnel Specialist are insufficient to justify a full-time position. It would appear that the rest of the professional staff of the Department (including the Division of Staffing) could assume the miscellaneous Personnel Specialist's tasks, if they were divided among several staff members. Responsibilities such as the 80-72 program, United Way campaign, some limited certification work, and so forth could easily be assigned to others and not increase their workload dramatically.

The observations about workload requirements presented in this chapter are based on observations and analyses performed during the seven-month period ending January 1983. This report recommends a substantially increased use of automation in support of personnel services, much of which would be the responsibility of the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records. Therefore, as the new automated functions are implemented, MCPS should analyze their impact on the Division's workload to determine if this report's observations and recommendations remain valid. It is anticipated that these observations and recommendations will remain valid, but empirical testing of that expectation is desirable.

Records Maintenance Staffing Does Not Match Seasonal Workload

Although the workload of the Records Maintenance Section has a relatively short high peak workload period, the Section maintains the same level of personnel during the entire year. Moreover, the

Section uses minimal overtime and no seasonal help. Because the Section can handle the workload during the peak summer months in a timely manner without resorting to extraordinary means, it appears the Section is significantly overstaffed during the remainder of the year.

Workload in the Section closely parallels the number of entries to the PMF records made on the Section's remote computer terminals. These entries directly represent a majority of the work of eight clerks, who spend most of their time making entries to the PMF; these entries do not include the creation of PMF files for new employees, although the hiring of new employees is also concentrated in the summer months. Work in the file room parallels that of the remainder of the Records Maintenance Section; it must file all the paperwork resulting from the various personnel actions resulting in the issuance of written documentation.

Exhibit V-2, on the following page, illustrates the seasonal nature of the PMF entry workload. The average number of CRT entries by the Division of Salary Administration per month for fiscal 1982 was approximately 6,500. The monthly average for the three summer months of June, July, and August, however, was approximately 10,830, about double the monthly average of 5,029 for the other nine months of the year. Moreover, a review of six years of data on PMF entries indicates that the pattern of work has remained remarkably consistent.

Only one of the nonsummer months, October, has a workload significantly above the average. This fluctuation is caused primarily by the PMF entry clerks waiting until October to enter teacher stipend employment data (for such extracurricular activities as coaching athletic teams, sponsoring school clubs and class organizations, and so forth). Because stipend information is submitted for numerous employees on the same document from one school, this stipend entry responsibility does not represent quite as much effort as many entries.

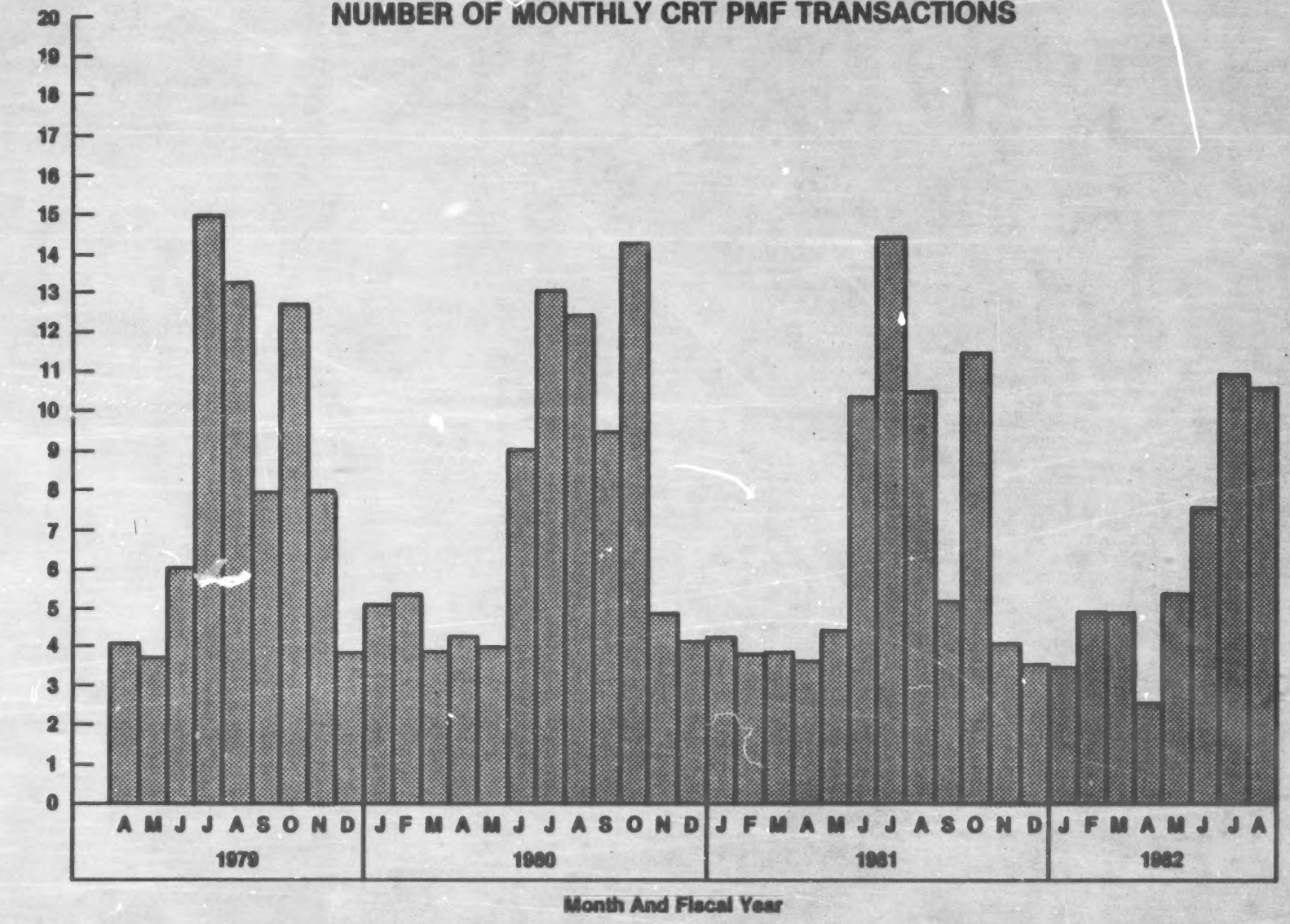
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Division Is Actively Addressing Deficiencies In Written Position Descriptions

The Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records has recognized that written job descriptions do not exist for some positions and that many existing job descriptions are poorly written and are written in a variety of formats. To remedy these problems, the Division has undertaken a project to write new job descriptions where none exist and to review, revise, and put into a common format existing descriptions. An outside consultant was used for part of this task and it is being continued by Division staff. The Division Director predicts that the task of rewriting position descriptions will be complete by the end of the school year.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

NUMBER OF MONTHLY CRT PMF TRANSACTIONS



Source: Monthly CRT Monitor Statistics, Department of Management Information and Computer Services.

EXHIBIT V-2

In Spite Of Certain Concerns, No Major Review Of The Classification System Appears Warranted At This Time

Some concern exists as to whether the existing classification system may need revision in order to reduce the number of incumbent classes. This could be accomplished by consolidating single incumbent classes into broader generic classes. It is expected that such action would enable MCPS to ensure better control over any unwarranted growth in the average grading of classified positions (referred to as "grade creep").

While a review of the classification structure indicates the existence of many classes, the structure appears to be justified. A recent classification review of supporting services positions proposed several reclassifications, including adding new titles to achieve more consistency in the assignment of class titles; describing better the nature and level of work involved; deleting some outmoded titles; and taking into account supervisor and employee titling preferences to the extent possible. It is not evident that fewer titles would result in a more efficient and equitable classification structure. On the contrary, reliance on generic classes to represent one-of-a-kind positions creates difficulties in establishing job-related selection instruments and qualified applicant lists.

Further, although there have been some increases in the average grades in both A&S and supporting staff services personnel in the past, they have not been significant. The average grade increase of the A&S positions was from 3.255 in fiscal 1978 to 3.324 in fiscal 1981, an increase of 2.1 per cent in three years. With respect to supporting services positions, the average grade increase was from 8.54 in fiscal 1977 to 8.68 in fiscal 1981, a 1.6 per cent increase over four years. This slight growth in the average grade level could be attributable to factors other than classification abuse, for example, reduced recruitment of entry level applicants and the retention of more senior employees because of reductions in force.

In general, requests for reclassification appear to be handled adequately. Regulation 445-d ("Maintenance of the Classification Plan") outlines procedures for determining position classifications, reviewing classification of existing positions, reconstituting positions, classifying a proposed additional position, and drafting classification specifications. School system officials expressed very little concern with existing procedures and the manner in which they are carried out.

In fact, use of the three factor evaluation systems eliminates much of the subjectivity often involved in classification work, helps ensure consistency in classifying jobs, reduces the likelihood that biases will become involved in classification work, and helps ensure that the most critical factors of jobs are given suitable weight when classification decisions are made.

Although The Three Existing Factor Evaluation Systems Are Sound, MCPS Lacks An Adequate System For Classifying Trades And Related Positions

The existing factor evaluation systems, however, are not applicable to the maintenance, crafts, transportation, supply, and building service positions. A quantitative method for classifying these positions does not exist.

Without a factor evaluation system for these other positions, the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records must place excessive reliance on comparing job worth and difficulty to market pay rates which could be biased. Simply put, subjective classifications are much less reliable and accurate than those based on sound factor evaluation systems. Moreover, use of a factor evaluation system for only some jobs in a pay scale (such as the supporting services pay scale) leaves MCPS open to complaints of unfairness.

MCPS Offers Competitive Salaries And Fringe Benefits

Salary surveys have repeatedly shown that MCPS salaries and fringe benefits are sufficiently competitive to allow the system to draw high-quality applicants. MCPS participates in several regional and national salary surveys and conducts its own surveys among school districts to ensure it has adequate knowledge of salary and fringe benefits trends. A recent Washington, D.C., area salary survey showed more than 90 per cent of MCPS starting salaries to be better than at least half the respondents' starting salaries. Moreover, for one-fourth of the jobs, MCPS offered higher starting salaries than 90 per cent of the respondents. MCPS salary midpoints averaged nearly 20 per cent above salary midpoints in this survey.

While there may be occasional difficulties in attracting the most desirable candidates because of national or regional shortages for certain types of employees, these problems are fairly infrequent. Moreover, MCPS has taken some action in the past to address these problems. For example, because of a difficulty in attracting computer systems programmers several years ago, MCPS adopted a 10 per cent temporary salary bonus or differential paid to systems programmers beyond the MCPS salary scale. MCPS has since determined that the competitive demand for systems programmers has decreased and the full differential is no longer necessary. Accordingly, next year MCPS will begin reducing the differential by 1 per cent annually, down to the level of 5 per cent.

Records Maintenance Is Timely, Accurate, And Well Controlled

The Division of Salary Administration maintains the various files, including the PMF, in a professional manner. Although improvements can be made, the maintenance procedures are generally accurate, provide sufficient controls, and are efficient.

PMF and other files are generally updated quickly and accurately. An audit of sample data from a number of PMF files, locator cards, certification files, salary history cards, and the master hard-copy personnel files indicates that data in the various files are accurate. Duplicate data in separate files agreed, thereby indicating accuracy. Further, a review of the PMF transaction data indicated that most actions are completed the same day they are received.

Security and control over files are adequate. Controls are appropriately most stringent over the PMF and master hard-copy personnel files. Access to the master personnel files is generally limited by file room personnel to themselves and other Departmental personnel. Locking Departmental offices in conjunction with periodic security patrols offers sufficient, although not ideal, security.

Distribution of information in these files is also limited, correctly, by Departmental procedures which require written requests, often with written employee approval, for most sensitive data. A minor deficiency, however, does exist in the control over these files. Although Departmental procedures officially do not allow it, staff in the Department of Personnel Services other than the file room clerks have direct access to files. While this procedure reduces the workload of the file clerks, it also decreases control over the files and increases the likelihood that files will be removed from the room without checking them out.

Controls over changes to the PMF to ensure accuracy and correct authorization are quite stringent. First, a Divisionclerk who does not make the actual PMF data changes reviews the change and ensures that it has been authorized correctly by someone outside the Records Maintenance Section. Second, verification of the accuracy of PMF entries is performed by a clerk separate from the entry clerk, thereby helping to ensure both security and accuracy. Third, computer edits detect some errors. Fourth, mailing the Personnel Action Notices (PAN's) to affected individuals and to their supervisors adds a double check to help ensure that the correct action is taken. With these checks and double checks, the probability of willful or unintentional incorrect entries being made to the PMF by the Division of Salary Administration is small.

The file room appears well run, although a backlog of work currently exists. Given the level of work that exists for the file room clerks, its staff is at a minimum. In fact, a backlog of work exists. For example, although crucial documents had been filed as of September, copies of salary information notices (a routine piece of information) for the beginning of the school year had not yet been filed. Similarly, a project to review and purge unnecessary documents from all files is not yet complete. While the file room uses projects and tasks such as those outlined to fill in during slow work periods, the existence of a substantial backlog of work indicates that the file room is minimally staffed.

The maintenance of separate certification files appears justified. Because of the frequent reference to certification information, maintaining files with these data appears cost-effective.

Although maintaining duplicate files (the master personnel files also include some certification data) adds somewhat to the filing task, maintaining easy-to-use certification files saves much time and effort in obtaining the larger, master files from the file room and searching out the necessary information. Further, only a limited amount of information is actually duplicated in both files. In total, maintaining separate certification files does not appear to require more time or effort than using the main files for certification reviews.

The Maintenance Of Locator Cards Is An Unnecessary, Labor-Intensive Activity

Currently, the Salary Administration Division maintains hard-copy file cards on all active MCPS employees, containing such information as name, address, phone number, work location, and date of employment. The file room manually maintains these cards, which are filed alphabetically by name, and uses them to verify employment, length of employment, and certain other data over the phone. The locator card system was established to avoid having to pull entire personnel files to find a few pieces of information to answer the approximately 6,000 phone inquiries annually.

Maintaining these cards is time-consuming, requiring approximately 0.5 to 0.6 person-years of effort annually in the file room and approximately 30 to 40 hours of the time of other clerks. The information contained on these cards is in the PMF and could be printed periodically by computer, thereby avoiding the necessity of maintaining cards by hand. In fact, the Division Director's secretary currently obtains a monthly computer printout of much of the information on the locator cards so that she does not have to go to the file room every time she has a question regarding the location of an employee.

The Personnel Master File Has Serious Deficiencies

These deficiencies, many of which are already documented in the MORE Report on the Payroll System, increase the amount of clerical maintenance support required in the Division of Salary Administration and Payroll. The MORE Report on the Payroll System notes five examples of cumbersome procedures inherent in the PMF computer software programs that limit the ability of the Division to provide timely maintenance of employee records. These examples generally illustrate situations that require two-step processing to accomplish a single personnel action, usually requiring at least two days and several clerical actions.

Further, the PMF's structural requirement for overnight processing of entries and changes reduces the timeliness of PMF data. At least one day is required for processing a simple change; two days are required if corrections must be made. If problems arise with a particular entry, several more days can be required to complete a transaction. PMF data entry edits are also inadequate. First, because there are no instantaneous computer edits of data entry, simple errors (such as keypunching) will not be detected until the overnight PMF update is run. Second, computer editing techniques are incomplete, thereby resulting in errors being discovered at later times. For example, the PMF will evidently accept some outdated or incorrect budget account numbers. The invalid account numbers may be discovered only when the payroll is run, thereby requiring a manual search of the reason for an accounting error and a manual correction of the computer records.

Two other problems have a direct impact on the cost of maintaining the system. First, an excess of data appears to be required to be keypunched to make some changes to PMF files. For example, a simple change in the number of hours a professional employee works requires the entry of several pieces of salary and pay information, even if the pay rate is not changing. Second, and most important, the PMF is not structured to facilitate its use as a research tool. For example, although some salary history data are stored on PMF related computer files, the data are apparently incomplete and are difficult to retrieve. Because of the difficulty in using the PMF as a research tool, Salary Administration manually maintains the salary history cards on each employee. Salary history and status are indicated on these cards to facilitate research on problems and to answer employee questions. Although maintaining these salary history cards requires an estimated 1.5 to 2.0 staff years of effort annually and the cards are duplicate files, the effort appears justified because of the difficulties in using the PMF as a research tool.

In total, these deficiencies in the PMF decrease its usefulness as a basic personnel and payroll information tool and increase the number of staff required to maintain the system.

Entry Of PMF Data Is Time-Consuming And Complicated

The process of entering data on the PMF involves transcription of data at least twice, thereby increasing the time required to update the PMF and increasing the likelihood of errors. It may be possible to eliminate one step of the process.

At least four persons are involved in the process. Division of Staffing personnel transmit instructions on changes to the PMF to Salary Administration on green sheets of paper known as transaction sheets. The same sheets are used for virtually all types of transactions. Staffing personnel enter the action to be taken and such data as position control number, name, location, school

being transferred from, school being transferred to, and so forth. The form is then signed and dated. After review of the transaction sheet and back-up data by one Salary Administration clerk, another clerk codes the data (converts it into numbered data, in a specified order), records it on another sheet of paper, and enters it into the PMF by way of remote terminal.

Deficiencies In Personnel Actions Cause Problems In Payroll Processing

As the MORE Report on the Payroll System noted, submission of personnel actions not in compliance with the needs of the payroll system results in incomplete payrolls and a great deal of manual effort by the Division of Payroll to correct the discrepancies.

Specifically, any actions affecting a payroll must normally be entered into the PMF by the last Thursday of a pay period or the normally processed payroll will not recognize the change. If, for example, a new employee record is entered into the PMF on the last Thursday or Friday of the pay period, the payroll system will not generate a pay check for that period. Rather, if the employee correctly submitted his or her timesheet, the employee would show up on a "no-pay" list, thereby indicating a discrepancy. The Division of Payroll and the Division of Salary Administration would have to investigate to determine the cause of the problem and might have to generate a special payment for the employee or pay the employee retroactively during the next pay period.

Similarly, the inability of the payroll system to handle more than one pay rate in the same pay period requires the Division of Payroll to manually adjust pay retroactively to accommodate mid-pay period salary changes. Administrative procedures have been designed to limit the number of manual adjustments required of the Division of Payroll. For example, annual increases in pay due to step movements are effective the first day of the pay period in which the anniversary date falls.

Some policy and sound personnel administration reasons justifiably prevent completion of the paperwork required to avoid manual salary adjustments. For example, according to MCPS policy, pay increases to teachers due to completion of educational requirements authorizing movement to a higher salary lane are effective the beginning of the pay period immediately following completion of the last required course. Because of the time required for teachers to request the increase in salary and submit a course grade slip and for Salary Administration to evaluate the course, it is virtually impossible to process a salary increase change in time to avoid a manual, retroactive pay calculation. Moreover, MCPS policy recognizes these difficulties by authorizingup to three months of retroactive pay in these cases.

Insufficient Attention Is Given To The Causes Of And Possible Remedies For Adjustments To Pay

Although the Division of Payroll and the Division of Salary Administration make conscientious efforts to ensure that individual employees receive the pay due to them on time, even when problems in the information reported by supervisors or information in the PMF require manual adjustments, the two Divisions have made insufficient efforts to analyze the causes of such problems or to alter procedures or systems to reduce the number of required manual adjustments. Neither Division regularly monitors the number or type of incidents that cause excess work in the Division of Payroll and precipitate failure to meet normal deadlines. Neither Division produces a regular report indicating the number of "no pays" generated each pay period, the causes of such "no pays," or trends in the incidences of "no pays." Lacking information of this type, it is difficult for management to determine the significance of problems, the causes of the problems, or whether or not the trend is improving or becoming worse.

Second, the school system's management has not taken steps to ensure the timely submission of performance evaluations by supervisors, resulting in large numbers of late evaluations and requiring numerous retroactive annual pay increases. Annual step increases in pay cannot be authorized for supporting services employees until satisfactory performance evaluations are received. Further, although Salary Administration gives supervisors two months notice of due dates for these evaluations, sufficient lead time for following up on late evaluations is notallowed. Currently, the Division requests that evaluations be submitted at least two weeks before the effective date of any possible pay increase. The Division does not contact late supervisors until at least the effective date of a pay increase (usually by phone), however, and may not issue a written reminder for another month or more. The Division may issue as many as three letters after the initial phone contact. As a result of lack of emphasis and enforcement from top management and insufficiently early reminders from the Division, the number of overdue performance appraisals is large. A review of Division records in late September 1982 showed that more than 20 evaluations necessary for pay increases due by the middle of August and more than 70 due by mid- or late September had not yet been received.

The Testing Program Is Rigorous, Effective, And Efficient

MCPS's personnel testing program makes a significant contribution to the objective selection of the most qualified candidates. Only one other district surveyed for this study had such a program. Most districts do not require tests of applicants; most of those that do simply administer purchased commercial tests. Procedures used for the selection, development, and validation of tests provide evidence of suitability and reliability. The tests screen out substantial numbers of applicants, with 40 per cent to 50 per cent of all applicants disqualified for most positions

having tests with minimum qualifying scores. Test results provide an objective index of qualifications and are used in determining rank orders among applicants for supporting services positions. According to a recent analysis by the Personnel Assessment Specialist, test results are also among the most powerful predictors of job performance.

Taped and written instructions (which allow the Testing Assistant to perform other duties while tests are being taken) contribute to the testing program's efficiency. The ability to provide test results within five minutes of testing allows applicants to complete their tests and interviews in one visit and provides timely information to staffing personnel.

Test results are provided to unsuccessful applicants, who are encouraged to take the tests again after strengthening their knowledge and skill in specified areas. This procedure gives the testing program a constructive educational purpose and enables school system officials to make better informed hiring decisions.

The only concerns regarding the testing program are whether work performance samples should be provided for some positions and whether test scores receive adequate attention in selecting applicants for teaching positions. For positions that require specific, observable skills and knowledge (for example, repairing specific types of equipment), the opportunity to observe applicants carry out a sample of critical tasks would be most useful.

Development of valid procedures for obtaining such samples and the devotion of adequate amounts of time to observation can be quite expensive, however, and would require careful investigation before decisions are made. In selecting teachers, applicants who achieve at least the minimum qualifying scores and who pass the other parts of the screening process are considered by principals without the benefit of rank-ordered lists based on quantitative indexes of the various screening criteria. While there can be problems with inflexible uses of rank-ordered lists where some discretion and judgment are appropriate, the complete absence of such lists, even as general guides, reduces the influence of whatever objective evidence is available, including test scores.

Few Incentives Exist To Encourage Superior Performance

Withholding of salary increments and provision of special awards are infrequent. Most employees receive annual step pay increases, until they reach the top of the pay scale, as long as their performance is satisfactory. In calendar year 1981, only 28 supporting service step advancements were deferred because of poor evaluations.

A superior awards program and a new A&S employee bonus program allow employees to be granted a one-time bonus or an accelerated salary increment if their performance is particularly outstanding.

In fiscal 1982, however, only nine supporting services and 12 professional employees received monetary, special awards for superior performance.

No Apparent Quality Control Exists Over Performance Evaluations

No MCPS department has responsibility for reviewing, or at least spot checking, performance evaluations to ensure that they are being completed conscientiously and professionally. As a result, the evaluation system does little to improve performance and to weed out persons who are either incompetent or unwilling to fulfill their responsibilities satisfactorily. Most MCPS supervisors apparently complete performance evaluations in a perfunctory manner and, consequently, most school school system employees receive satisfactory ratings regardless of performance. Some of the persons on the involuntary transfer lists are not selected by principals because of negative reputations; in spite of this situation, however, no official evaluations exist to provide defensible evidence.

C - RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the chapter presents study recommendations designed to improve the operations of the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Personnel Specialist Position Should Be Phased Out

The Personnel Specialist currently devotes more than 50 per cent of his time to supervising the Supervising Office Assistant. Because this added layer of supervision is an unnecessary duplication and because the position's other responsibilities can be absorbed by other staff members, the position should be eliminated.

When this position is eliminated, the Supervising Office Assistant should report directly to the Division Director. The miscellaneous nonsupervisory responsibilities of the Personnel Specialist should be divided and assigned to professionals in both Divisions so that no one person's workload is increased more than 5 per cent to 10 per cent.

Taking this action will eliminate an unnecessary level of supervision in the Division, avoiding duplication of effort and bringing the Division Director closer to the day-to-day issues and problems in Records Maintenance. Elimination of this position would save MCPS approximately $42,000 annually in salary and fringe benefits.

Division Staffing Patterns Should Be Modified To Match Seasonal Workloads

To allow the Division to meet high seasonal peak workloads without overstaffing for the rest of the year, the full-time staff should be reduced in conjunction with hiring seasonal staff and using moderate amounts of overtime.

Specifically, eliminating locator cards (as discussed later in this chapter) and reducing clerk coding efforts would reduce the full-time staff of the Records Maintenance Section by three, from 13 to 10. (The Board of Education's adopted budget for fiscal 1984 already reduces this staff to 12; therefore, this recommendation calls for an additional reduction of two permanent employees in this unit.) At the same time, the Division should be authorized to hire three summer staff members and budget approximately $3,500 in additional overtime funds to help handle the peak workload period. Hiring school-based clerical ten-month employees as seasonal help should be considered in order to take advantage of their familiarity with MCPS administrative procedures.

Because maintaining the PMF, entering data in the remote CRTs, and verifying PMF entries are complex tasks, only full-time staff familiar with the PMF should be assigned to these tasks, to monitoring the submission of performance evaluations, and to mailing out copies of Personnel Action Notices.

Most of the full-time staff should be trained in PMF maintenance procedures. One permanent staff member should be assigned to the file room and other Division clerical staff should be rotated through the file room for two-month periods. During the peak work period, two seasonal employees should be assigned to the file room, thereby allowing full-time staff to concentrate on PMF maintenance. (Eliminating locator cards should substantially reduce the file room's summer workload.)

Authorized overtime should be used primarily to meet higher workloads when seasonal help is not available. Steps should be taken to reduce the peak in workload during October due to entering authorized stipend information into the PMF. Possible actions could include having keypunchers enter data onto the PMF tape (as is done for new employees) and beginning work on the stipend entries earlier in September. Adjusting Division staffing as recommended should save approximately $33,000 annually in salary and fringe benefits (including funds to be saved by eliminating the clerical position already dropped in the fiscal 1984 budget adopted by the Board of Education).

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

MCPS Should Develop A Factor Evaluation System For Classifying Trades And Building Services Job

A new system should be established, as there is currently no factor ranking procedure for these positions. The new system should evaluate jobs based on critical factors influencing job worth. A method of quantifying the scoring of the factor ratings should be established and standards for scoring should also be developed. Any system developed should complement MCPS's existing factor evaluation systems and cover all employees not currently covered by the factor evaluation systems, principally maintenance, crafts, transportation, building service, and supply personnel.

Establishment of sound factor evaluation systems for classifying all MCPS employee positions will help to ensure that these positions are classified equitably and according to the factors most critical to job worth.

Computer-Generated Location Lists Should Be Substituted For The Locator Cards

The lists should be printed approximately every two weeks to a month to maintain their accuracy. Simultaneously, the Division should cease maintaining the locator cards because the computer-

generated lists will contain all of the information currently on the locator cards. The computer-generated lists should be provided to all staff who answer phone employment verification requests. Alternatively, a remote computer terminal could be placed in or near the file room so that file clerks can access PMF records quickly and directly when needing locator information. In either case, the hard copy locator cards should be eliminated.

Use of a computer-generated list rather than a manual locator card system will save approximately one-half person-year of effort annually. Programming could be performed by the Division's Personnel Data Analyst and the report could be substituted for another, similar report currently produced for the Division Director's secretary with no increased computer time costs required. Alternatively, installaton of a remote terminal in the file room would cost only approximately $1,600 annually and would provide file room clerks the capability of updating PMF records for address and committee changes.

The Personnel Master File Should Be Modified

As part of the development of a new human resources information system, major PMF modifications should:

- Eliminate the need for the salary history cards
- Accomplish several data entries with a single action
- Improve computer editing techniques
- Provide for more timely changes and updates of the PMF.

These and other improvements should significantly enhance the capabilities of the PMF while reducing the Salary Administration clerical staff required to maintain it. It is estimated that 2.0 to 3.0 staff years of labor annually could be eliminated with a well-designed system. Approximately 1.5 to 2.0 staff years of effort could be saved simply by eliminating the need to maintain the salary history cards. Other time savings should come from reductions in the number of errors, of double entries, and of multiple entries required. Possible annual savings in personnel costs from a new PMF would be approximately $30,000 to $45,000 in salaries plus fringe benefits.

PMF Data Entry Should Be Streamlined

To reduce the clerical time required to modify PMF data and reduce the likelihood of errors, the responsibility for much of the coding prior to data entry should be transferred from Salary Administration clerks to Division of Staffing personnel. New transaction sheets should be developed, tailored to each of the major PMF transactions (transfers, hour changes, promotions, and so forth). These new transmittal sheets should be designed to

be used also as coding sheets. Under such an arrangement, Division of Staffing personnel should enter specified data in a certain order on specially designed forms for data transactions. Salary administration clerks would then not have to code the data but, rather, could enter the data into the remote terminal directly, using the transmittal sheet.

Streamlining the data entry process as recommended would have several advantages. First, and most important, it would reduce the clerks' coding efforts and time dramatically. While it may be difficult to design transaction forms for the more complex actions, eliminating the clerks' coding should be feasible for most routine transactions. If just an average of 15 seconds per transaction could be eliminated, an estimated 20 to 40 person-hours each month or approximately one-fourth of one full-time-equivalent clerk's time could be saved (based on 5,000 to 10,000 transactions processed monthly). Second, implementing this recommendation should reduce the rate of data entry errors into the PMF simply because the number of times information is transcribed would be reduced. Finally, using more transaction-specific transmittal forms will require personnel in Staffing to transmit all the necessary information to Salary Administration initially. Currently, clerks must sometimes obtain data from Staffing personnel because it is omitted from the transmittal forms. The only cost of implementing this recommendation should be the minor expenditure for printing more transmittal forms.

Actions To Limit The Number Of Required Manual Adjustments To Pay Should Be Increased

Salary Administration should develop a periodic managerial report highlighting the number, trend, and causes of manual adjustments to pay. The Division should work with Payroll to develop a mechanism to record the number of different types of situations causing unnecessary manual adjustments and to summarize the principal causes of these adjustments.

For example, the report should include the number and causes of "no pays," (hours changes not submitted in time, incorrect budget account, and so forth), the number of adjustments made because of late notification of step pay increases (due to late performance evaluations), and the number of adjustments made because of changes in teacher salary lanes.

The report should be produced monthly and distributed to the Director and two Division Directors in the Department of Personnel Services and the Division of Payroll Director. The Division Directors should use the reports to determine the most significant causes of manual adjustments and to give them ideas on how to decrease the number of adjustments. With these reports, management can also monitor the trend of problems and take additional remedial action when required.

Second, Division management should reduce the number of late performance appraisals received for annual step pay increases. These actions should include requiring supervisors to submit performance evaluations four (rather than two) weeks before the effective date of the pay increase; issuing written reminders to supervisors a week or ten days before the due date of the appraisals; phoning supervisors on the due date of the appraisals, rather than two weeks to a month later; or notifying late supervisors' superiors immediately if evaluations are not submitted by the effective date of the pay increase.

Implementing this recommendation should, in the long run, aid the Divisions of Salary Administration and Payroll in reducing the number of manual adjustments to payrolls. It should be recognized, however, that because of MCPS policies and personnel managerial needs, some manual adjustments to pay will always be made. Further, improvements brought about by a planned new payroll system (such as the ability to recognize two separate pay rates in the same pay period) and a new PMF should reduce the number of manual payroll adjustments substantially.

The Costs And Benefits Of Collecting Work Performance Samples As An Extension Of The Testing Program Should Be Analyzed

The Personnel Assessment Specialist should conduct cost/benefit analyses of work performance samples for selected supporting services positions. Data should be collected and analyzed on the time and cost required to develop valid instruments; the number of such instruments that would be required (keeping in mind the desirability of equity in selection procedures across positions); the cost of obtaining performance samples from applicants, including the time required of supervisors; and the value of the additional information yielded by such procedures. If this analysis results in the conclusion that the benefits outweigh the costs, the Personnel Assessment Specialist should proceed with the development of instruments and procedures following validation and implementation of the additional tests scheduled for development.

The Superintendent Should Assign The Department Responsibility For Reviewing The Adequacy Of Performance Evaluations

The Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records should conduct spot-check reviews of performance evaluations to determine whether they are being completed conscientiously. Review responsibilities should be divided among the Division's professional staff members. Reviewers should look through a sample of the evaluations submitted by each supervisor to determine whether ratings are being given adequate individual attention and whether explanatory comments are being supplied to guide employees in understanding needed improvements or to support dismissal, if dismissal is warranted. Departmental officials should

discuss review findings with supervisors whose evaluations are found wanting and should work with top mangement, upon direction from the Superintendent, so that top management can focus supervisors' priorities on effective performance.

MCPS Should Conduct A Study Of Needed Improvements In Performance Evaluation Procedures, Instruments, And Practices

Weaknesses in the school system's current performance evaluation procedures and practices are sufficient to justify a study focused on major problem areas and designed to result in improvement in the near term. The primary problems identified in the personnel study are (1) weaknesses in procedures and instruments used to evaluate the performance of supporting services employees, (2) the infrequency of evaluations of senior employees, and (3) lack of enforcement of existing evaluation requirements. Instruments and procedures for evaluating professionals were recently studied and strengthened; persons interviewed in the personnel study considered these instruments and procedures acceptable and stated that the primary problems are in their use. By contrast, the instruments and procedures used to evaluate supporting services employees have not been systematically reviewed for at least a decade; many interviewees expressed serious concern about their adequacy. Supporting services employees who have reached the tops of their pay scales, and teachers who have received tenure, are evaluated only every three years; such infrequent appraisals reduce incentives to excell and eliminate opportunities for constructive discussions of progress and needed improvement. Finally, as discussed elsewhere in this report, the failure of the school system's top managers to emphasize the importance of performance evaluations as an improvement mechanism, to set good examples by completing such evaluations conscientiously and on time, and to enforce existing requirements has reduced the potential effectiveness of performance evaluations significantly.

The recommended study should focus on the indicated areas of needed improvement, be structured to yield tangible results quickly, and have as a major goal the implementation of an evaluation system that fosters constructive review of employees' performance.

VI - COST IMPACT AND NEXT STEPS

This final chapter summarizes the cost impact of the recommendations made in the preceding chapters and suggests responsibilities and schedules for implementing the recommendations.

COST IMPACT

Implementation of this report's recommendations will make possible the eventual phasing out of eight positions through improvements in efficiency, enhancements in automated support, and adjustments in the distribution of workload across positions and periods of the school year. Elimination of these positions will save the school system more than $225,000 annually. The positions to be phased out include:

- The Assistant Director - Personnel Services
- One Personnel Assistant in the Division of Staffing (when an interactive automated position control system is successfully implemented)
- The Personnel Specialist who oversees Records Maintenance in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records
- The Secretary in the Employee Assistance Program
- One Secretary in the Division of Staffing (when additional word processing capability is fully implemented)
- Three clerks in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records (including the Clerk already eliminated in the Board's fiscal 1984 budget).

MCPS should attempt to place the incumbents of these positions in appropriate vacancies elsewhere in the school system or effect the reductions through attrition. The approximate salaries and benefits to be saved through elimination of these positions (assuming a 13.6 per cent contribution by MCPS for insurance, which is included in the estimates given below, and coverage of social security and retirement benefits by the state, which are not included in the estimates) are as follows:

Position	Salaries And Benefits
Assistant Director - Personnel Services	$ 61,500
Personnel Assistant - Staffing	34,000
Personnel Specialist - Records Maintenance	42,000
Secretary - Employee Assistance Program	20,500
Secretary - Staffing	20,500
Clerks (Three Permanent) - Salary Administration, Certification, And Records	47,700
	$226,200

Several of the study recommendations would entail expenditures by the school system, if implemented. Specifically, the addition of an Administrative Assistant in the Office of the Director - Personnel Services probably would cost between $30,000 and $35,000 annually, including salary and fringe benefits; the hiring of three temporary clerks in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records during the three summer months would cost approximately $12,000 annually; and additional overtime in the same Division would cost approximately $3,500 annually. Therefore, if these measures cost between $45,500 and $50,500 annually, and if approximately $226,500 is saved through the elimination of eight positions, the annual savings to MCPS will fall between $175,700 and $180,700.

An additional expenditure will be required to develop and support the new automated human resources system over the next few years. This does not represent an additional cost resulting from the recommendations made in this study, however, as MCPS had decided to begin development of this new system before initiation of the personnel study as a result of a detailed long-range data processing planning effort. Also, the new system will accomplish more than the staffing reductions suggested in this study; it will, for example, improve the accuracy and timeliness of personnel record-keeping and reporting. Funds already expended or committed in developing the new system include approximately $34,000 in fiscal 1982 (for the salary and benefits of one full-time staff member in the Department of Management Information and Computer Services) and approximately $103,580 in fiscal 1983 (including approximately $98,000 for the salaries and benefits of three fulltime persons on the development staff and $5,580 for six-month rental of three new terminals and a printer in the Department of Personnel Services). Projected development and implementation expenditures for the four remaining years of development are as follows:

	Fiscal 1984	Fiscal 1985	Fiscal 1986	Fiscal 1987	Total
Salaries And Benefits Of Development Staff	$148,000	$148,000	$ 74,000	$ 37,000	$407,000
Rental Of Equipment In Department Of Personnel Services	11,160	25,200	25,200	25,200	86,760
Total	$159,160	$173,200	$ 99,200	$ 62,200	$493,760

The Department of Management Information and Computer Services estimates that five full-time staff will be required for development work in fiscal 1984 and fiscal 1985 and that the level of required support will diminish in the final two years of development, as the work to be accomplished at that point will consist primarily of preparing ways of using the personnel data base, which will have been constructed by that point. The estimated equipment costs include 12 months of rental of the three new terminals and printer in fiscal 1984 and the addition of nine more CRT's beginning in fiscal 1985 (six of which will be in the Division of Salary Administration, Certification, and Records and three of which will be in the Division of Staffing) at $130 per CRT per month. After fiscal 1985, it is predicted that equipment rental costs will stabilize at $25,200 annually, as the Department then will have all of the equipment it will require.

Finally, the successful completion of several analyses recommended in this report - such as the study of the cost implications of MCPS's leave advancement policies and the analysis of alternative approaches to reviewing disability leave and workers' compensation claims - may save the school system additional funds annually.

NEXT STEPS

The Superintendent and his staff should review this report in detail to gain a full understanding of the observations and recommendations resulting from the study. Following this review, the Superintendent should present his recommendations for implementation to the Board of Education.

Following the Board's decisions, the Superintendent should adopt a plan of action. Exhibit VI-1, on the following pages, is designed to serve as the basis for this plan, modified as necessary by the Board's decisions. The exhibit lists suggested assignments of responsibility and schedules for implementing each of the report's major recommendations. This listing can serve as a guide and as a set of milestones against which implementation progress can be measured. The Department of Educational Accountability should report periodically to the Superintendent on the status of implementation activities, and the Superintendent should submit periodic implementation reports to the Board.

Montgomery County Public Schools
Department Of Personnel Services

RESPONSIBILITIES AND SCHEDULES FOR IMPLEMENTING STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Primary Responsibility	Suggested Schedule Commence	Complete
MCPS, Department, And Office Of The Director			
Strengthen Department's supporting mission while preserving decision-making authority of line managers.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous
Emphasize line personnel management and use Department to monitor quality of work.	Superintendent	3/83	Continuous
Continue to strive for comparable personnel services for supporting services and professional employees.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous
Provide timely, succinct communications of personnel policies.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous
Modify Department's organizational structure to improve efficiency and effectiveness in meeting school system needs.	Board of Education	3/83	7/83
Review alternative reporting relationships for the Department.	New Superintendent	7/83	8/83
Place the EAP, retirement counseling, and staff development units in the Department.	Board of Education	6/83	12/83
Phase out position of Assistant Director - Personnel.	Board of Education	3/83	6/83
Review and approve EYE hiring recommendations	Director - Staffing	3/83	Continuous
Assume responsibility for comprehensive MCPS manpower planning.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous
Establish measurable long-range and annual objectives for the Department.	Director - Personnel	3/83	7/83

Recommendation	Primary Responsibility	Suggested Schedule Commence	Complete
Assume a stronger role in monitoring the implementation of personnel practices by line managers.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous
Improve communications with users, clarify responsibilities, and resolve issues.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous
Expedite the installation of the improved human resources system and expanded word processing support.	Associate Superintendent - Supportive Services	3/83	Continuous
Improve the Department's physical facilities.	Associate Superintendent - Supportive Services	3/83	12/83
Enforce or change compensatory leave policies.	Board of Education	3/83	Continuous
Evaluate early retirement option.	Board of Education	3/83	9/83
Division Of Staffing			
Retain specialized assignments for screening; support generalist approach to assistance with improved automation.	Director - Staffing	3/83	Continuous
Phase out two positions when improved automated support is implemented.	Board of Education	6/83	Following full implementation of automation
Conduct additional planning and improvement projects during less active periods; provide temporary assistance during busy periods as needed.	Director - Staffing	3/83	Continuous
Disallow vacations during summer months.	Director - Staffing	5/83	Continuous
Allocate, monitor, and adjust assignments more systematically.	Director - Staffing	3/83	Continuous
Provide management training to Division managers.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous

Recommendation	Primary Responsibility	Suggested Schedule Commence	Complete
Promptly communicate changes in policies and procedures in succinct written form.	Director - Staffing	3/83	Continuous
Improve recruitment efforts through systematic analysis of staffing needs, documentation of focused goals, and analysis of results.	Director - Staffing	3/83	Continuous
Modify transfer and position allocation procedures to assist schools with obstacles to attracting teachers.	Superintendent	3/83	5/83
Improve consistency of selection activities through specific guidance, enforcement of documentation requirements, and closer monitoring.	Director - Personnel	3/83	Continuous
Further streamline procedures for processing new hires through improved automated support.	Director - Staffing and Director - Management Information and Computer Services	3/83	10/84
Establish part-time positions where appropriate to reduce costs.	Superintendent	3/83	Continuous
Enforce transfer deadlines and penalize late notification of vacancies.	Superintendent	5/83	Continuous
Strengthen position control procedures through enforcement of responsibilities and improved automation.	Deputy Superintendent and Director - Management Information and Computer Services	3/83	10/84
Require brief evaluations of all substitutes.	Director - Staffing	3/83	Continuous
Provide lists of substitutes by area when improved automation is installed.	Director - Staffing	Following implementation of automation	
Improve controls over hiring and use of temporary employees.	Director - Staffing	3/83	6/83

Recommendation	Primary Responsibility	Suggested Schedule Commence	Complete
Division Of Salary Administration, Certification, And Records			
Phase out the Personnel Specialist position in Salary Administration.	Board of Education	-	6/84
Modify Division staffing patterns to better match seasonal workloads.	Director - Salary Administration, Certification, and Records	3/83	6/83
Develop a factor evaluation system for classifying trades and building services jobs.	Director - Salary Administration, Certification, and Records	3/83	8/83
Assign responsibility for monitoring the use of sick leave to the Department.	Superintendent	3/83	7/83
Study alternatives to leave advancement policy.	Ad hoc committee	3/83	12/83
Analyze procedures for reviewing disability leave and workers' compensation claims.	Director - Financial Services and Director - Administrative Analysis and Audits	3/83	12/83
Substitute computer-generated employee location lists for the locator cards.	Director - Salary Administration, Certification, and Records and Director - Management Information and Computer Services	5/83	10/84
Modify the Personnel Master File.	Director - Salary Administration, Certification, and Records and Director - Management Information and Computer Services	3/83	10/84
Streamline PMF data entry procedures.	Director - Salary Administration, Certification, and Records	3/83	10/84

Recommendation	Primary Responsibility	Suggested Schedule Commence	Complete
Increase actions to limit the number of required manual adjustments to pay.	Director - Salary Administration, Certification, and Records	3/83	7/83
Analyze the costs and benefits of work performance samples.	Personnel Assessment Specialist	Following development of all needed tests	
Assign the Department responsibility for reviewing the adequacy of performance evaluations.	Superintendent	3/83	Continuous
Conduct a study of needed improvements in performance evaluation procedures, instruments, and practice.	Director - Administrative Analysis and Audits	7/83	2/84

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL SURVEY OF PERSONNEL DEPARTMENTS

This appendix summarizes the findings of a survey of 13 selected school districts as part of CMP's MORE study of the Department of Personnel Services.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

To compare MCPS's personnel policies and services with those of other school districts, CMP conducted a phone survey of personnel directors in a national sample of 13 districts, including 4 districts in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. The sampled districts, which were comparable to MCPS in terms of size and suburban character, include:

Anne Arundel County, Maryland
Baltimore County, Maryland
Dade County, Florida
Dallas, Texas
Denver, Colorado
Fairfax County, Virginia
Hillsborough County, Florida
Jefferson County, Colorado
Jefferson County, Kentucky
Memphis, Tennessee
Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee
Orange County, Florida
Prince George's County, Maryland.

SIZE OF DISTRICTS SURVEYED

Student enrollment in the districts surveyed ranges from 66,000 to 225,000 and averages 94,938. Ten of the 13 districts reported declining enrollments.

District staffs range in size from 6,407 to 14,900 employees. The average staff size is 10,157 for all districts and 9,762 for the 12 districts with staffs under 13,500. (One district's staff was substantially larger than all others, thereby distorting the average.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONNEL DEPARTMENTS

Five of the 13 personnel directors report directly to the Superintendent, and 8 report to an Assistant or Deputy Superintendent.

Departmental staff sizes range from 20 to 83 employees. The average number of employees per department is 42, 32 per cent of whom are professional and 68 per cent of whom are clerical. Ratios of personnel staff members to total district staff vary between 1:444 and 1:145 and average 1:260. The ratio of personnel department staff members to student enrollment ranges from 1:1,470 to 1:5,000 and averages 1:2,667.

The surveyed departments are organized in three ways. Most departments (7) are divided by function. Generally, such departments have distinct divisions for employee relations, employee services, salary and benefits, and employee placement. Three departments are organized into divisions responsible for specific types of employees (for example, classified and nonclassified, teaching and nonteaching, or elementary, secondary, and classified). The remaining three departments combine both employee-type and functional divisions.

BUDGETS

Total school district budgets range from $135,000,000 to $800,000,000 and average $293,000,000. Personnel budgets range from $570,000 to $2,100,000 and average $1,316,666. As a percentage of the total budget, personnel expenses vary between 0.3 per cent and 1.3 per cent and average 0.52 per cent.

LOCATION OF PERSONNEL-RELATED FUNCTIONS

Employee relations are handled by the personnel departments in 4 of the 13 districts. In most instances, this function is placed outside the personnel department because it is a specialized function and because the personnel departments are viewed as more service-oriented.

Only 2 of the 13 personnel departments are responsible for staff development and training. In 10 districts, this function falls within the purview of a curriculum or instruction department.

Only three of the districts surveyed test applicants for employment, and only one has a testing program in which tests are developed, evaluated, and validated. All three districts that test applicants for minimum proficiency do so through the personnel department.

Seven districts certify teachers. In each of these cases the personnel departments exercise this responsibility. The remaining six do not have the authority to do so.

Classification is performed by the personnel department in 12 of the 13 districts.

The personnel department maintains the master personnel files in 9 of the 11 districts with automated files.

Two of the personnel departments are responsible for paying employees and maintaining leave balance records. The remaining 11 departments work cooperatively with the payroll department or the finance or business office.

Insurance and retirement benefits are administered by the personnel department in eight of the districts. In four of the remaining districts, a department of employee benefits is responsible for this function.

The personnel department in five of the districts is responsible for human relations. In two of these districts, this function is divided between personnel and another office. Three districts have a separate human relations department.

Seven of 13 districts have employee assistance programs. Five of these districts administer the program through the personnel department.

RIF's AND TRANSFERS

Six of the 13 districts have laid off employees within the past year. RIF'ing procedures and policies in all of these districts are based solely on seniority within subject areas. In most cases, teachers from closed schools are given an opportunity to apply for voluntary transfers. Remaining vacancies are then filled by administrative placements.

SEASONALITY OF PERSONNEL WORK

Of the eight departments that reported seasonal changes in workload, only two hire temporary clerical workers. The other departments either handle the work themselves or borrow workers from other departments. All of these departments are busiest from March or April through October.

PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

None of the districts surveyed currently have performance incentive programs for teachers. (One district is developing such a program). Two districts have performance incentives for classified employees who demonstrate "outstanding ability" or who devise successful cost reduction plans. One district has instituted an incentive program for administrators that is based on "action plans," which include specified objectives.

MANPOWER PLANNING

Manpower planning is conducted by all surveyed school districts as part of the annual budgeting process. Generally, these plans are based upon enrollment and program needs as reported by principals. Only two districts engage in long-term (five-year) planning.

LEAVE

Teacher sick leave is advanced in eight districts and accrued in five. Most of the districts that advance leave reported problems with employees who use all of their sick days and then resign. Generally, districts try to combat this problem by deducting the equivalent pay from the employee's last paycheck.

Retirees are reimbursed for unused leave in 11 of the 13 districts. Reimbursement policies vary from a flat rate per day to a graded seniority scale. Districts that do not reimburse retirees subtract unused leave from the retirement date without withholding benefits. Both systems are seen as deterrents to sick leave abuse. In addition to reimbursing for unused leave, some districts discourage sick leave abuse by closely monitoring attendance records and by rewarding individuals with prizes and schools with money for program needs.

AUTOMATION

All surveyed districts either have extensive automated support for personnel functions or are in the process of installing automated systems. Easy access to personnel data pertaining to payroll, transfers, retirement, applications, affirmative action, and position control are viewed as the most critical automated support functions. Twelve of the thirteen departments either have access to word processors or have machines of their own.

ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES

Flex time, compensatory leave, and four-day workweeks have had limited use in the districts contacted. Generally, only a small number of clerical workers operate on a flex time schedule. Four-day weeks are limited to maintenance crews and summer workers, when they are used at all.

PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

Recruiting practices vary from districts that recruit on a national scale to districts that recruit at state colleges only. Minority teachers and teachers of math, science, foreign languages, industrial arts, and special education are recruited most heavily.

Procedures for hiring new employees are split evenly between centralized systems in which the personnel department makes all of the hiring decisions and decentralized systems in which the principals make hiring decisions based on interviews of prescreened applicants.